

VESTIGIA ARANEA - EXUVIAE MACHINAE - PROJECT ANGELBOOK - VOLUME IX - PART 25



EZEKIEL REDIK YARBROUGH®

Vestigia Araneae – Exuviae
Machinae – Project AngelBook –
Volume IX - Part 25
By Ezekiel Redik Yarbrough -
(DBM ECLIPZE)

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Now it matters.

Now it’s immortal.

What, then, is more preposterous than these things – that a human being, inferior in dignity, should make use of threats, not to a demon or soul of some dead person, but to the Sun-King himself, or to the Moon, or some one of the divine ones in the sky, himself uttering falsehood in order that they may be caused to speak the truth? For the declaration that he will assail the sky, that he will reveal to view the Arcana of Isis, that he will expose to public gaze the ineffable symbol in the innermost sanctuary, that he will stop the Baris; that, like Typhon, he will scatter the limbs of Osiris, or do something of a similar character, what is it but an extravagant absurdity, threatening what he neither knows how nor is able to perform? What dejection of spirit does it not produce in those who, like children, destitute of intelligence, are dismayed by groundless fear and terrified by these false alarms?

And yet Chairemon, the Scribe of the Temple, records these things as current discourse among the Egyptian priests. ¹⁶ It is also said that these threats, and others of like tenor, are very violent.

7. Sacred names and symbolic expressions

The Prayers also: What do they mean when they speak of the one coming forth to light from the slime, sitting on the Lotus-blossom, sailing in a boat, changing forms according to the season, and assuming a shape according to the Signs of the Zodiac? For so this is said to be seen at the Autopsias; and they unwittingly attribute to the divinity a peculiar incident of their own imagination. If, however, these expressions are uttered figuratively, and are symbolic representations of his forces, let them tell the interpretation of the symbols. For it is plain that if they denote the condition of the Sun, as in eclipses, they would be seen by every one who looked toward it intently.

Why, also, are terms preferred that are unintelligible, and of those that are unintelligible why are foreign ones preferred instead of those of our own language? For if the one who hears gives attention to the signification it is enough that the concept remains the same, whatever the term may be. For the divinity that is invoked is possibly not Egyptian in race; and if he is Egyptian, he is far from making use of Egyptian speech, or indeed of any human language at all. Either these are all artful contrivances of jugglers, and disguises having their origin in the passive conditions induced about us through being attributed to the divine agency, or we have left unnoticed conceptions of the divine nature that are contrary to what it is.

8. The First Cause

I desire you further to declare plainly to me what the Egyptian Theosophers believe the First Cause to be; whether Mind, or above mind; and whether one alone, or subsisting with another or with several others; whether unbodied or embodied, whether the very same as the Creator of the Universe (Demiurgos) or prior to the Creator; also whether they likewise have knowledge respecting Primal Matter; ¹⁷ or of what nature the first bodies were; and whether the Primal Matter was unoriginated, or was generated. For Chairemon and the others hold that there is not anything else prior to the worlds which we behold. At the beginning of their discourses they adopt the divinities of the Egyptians, but no other gods, except those called Planets, those that make up the

Zodiac and such as rise with these, and likewise those divided into decans, those which indicate nativities, and those which are called the Mighty Leaders. The names of these are preserved in the Almanacs, together with their routine of changes, their risings and settings, and their signifying of future events. For these men perceived that the things which were said respecting the Sun-God as the Demiurgos, or Creator of the Universe, and concerning Osiris and Isis, and all the Sacred Legends, may be interpreted as relating to the stars, their phases, occultations, and revolutions in their orbits, or else to the increase and decrease of the Moon, the course of the Sun, the vault of the sky as seen by night or by day, or the river Nile, and, in short, they explain everything as relating to natural objects, and nothing as having reference to incorporeal and living essences. ¹⁸

More of them likewise attribute to motion of the stars whatever may relate to us. They bind everything, I know not how, in the indissoluble bonds of necessity, which they term Fate, or allotment; and they also connect everything with those gods whom they worship in temples and with carved images and other objects, as being the only unbinders of Fate.

9. Nativities and Guardian Demons

The next thing to be learned relates to the peculiar demon or guardian spirit – how the Lord of the House ¹⁹ assigns it, according to what purpose or what quality of emanation or life or power conies from it to us, whether it really exists or does not exist, and whether it is impossible or possible actually to find the Lord of the House. Certainly, if it is possible, then the person has learned the scheme of his nativity; knowing his own guardian demon, is liberated from fate, is truly favored by divinity. Nevertheless, the rules for casting nativities are countless, and beyond comprehension. Moreover, it is impossible for expertness in astral observations to amount to an actual knowing, for there is great disagreement in relation to it, and Chairemon, as well as many others, have spoken against it. Hence the assumption of a Lord of the House (or Lords of the House, if there are more than one) pertaining to a nativity is almost confessed by astrologers themselves to be beyond absolute proving; and yet it is from this assumption, they say, that the ascertaining of the person's own personal demon is possible.

But further, I wish to be informed whether our personal demon presides over some specific one of the regions within us. For it seems to be believed by some persons that there are demons allotted to specific departments of the body – one over the health, one over the figure, and another over the bodily habits, forming a bond of union among them; and that one is placed as superior over all of them in common. And further, they suppose that there is one demon guardian of the body, another of the soul, and another of the superior mind; ²⁰ also that some demons are good and others bad.

I am in doubt, however, whether our particular demon may not be a special part of the soul; and hence he who has a mind imbued with good sense would be the truly favored one.

I observe, moreover, that there is a twofold worship of the personal demon; also, that

some perform it as to two and others as to three, but nevertheless he is invoked by all with a common form of invocation.

10. Eudemonia, or the True Success

I question, however, whether there may not be some other secret path to true success which is afar from (the Rites of) the gods. I doubt whether it is really necessary to pay any regard to the opinions of individuals in regard to the divine endowment of divination and Theurgy, and whether the Soul does not now and then form grand conceptions. On the contrary, also, there are other methods for obtaining premonitions of what will take place. Perhaps, also, they who exercise the divine art of divining may indeed foresee, and yet they are not really successful: for they may foresee future events and not know how to make use of the foresight properly for themselves. I desire from you, therefore, to show me the path to success and in what the essence of it consists. For among us (philosophers) there is much wrangling, as though good might be derived from human reasonings by comparison of views.

If, however, this part of the inquiry, the intimate association with the superior race is passed over by those who devised it, wisdom will be taught by them to trivial purpose, such as calling the Divine Mind to take part about the finding of a fugitive slave, or a purchase of land, or, if it should so happen, a marriage or a matter of trade. Suppose, however, that this subject of intimate communion with the Superior race is not passed over, and those who are thus in communication tell things that are remarkably true about different matters, but nothing important or trustworthy in relation to the true success – employing themselves diligently with matters that are difficult, but of no use to human beings – then there were neither gods nor good demons present, but on the contrary, a demon of that kind called “Vagabond,” or it was all an invention of men or an air-castle of a mortal nature.

Notes:

1. Porphyry, it is well known, was a distinguished scholar, and the foremost writer in the later Platonic School. He was a native of Tyre, and his name Molech, or King, was rendered by Longinus into Porphurios, denoting the royal purple, as a proper equivalent. He was a disciple of Plotinus, who had broadened the field of philosophic study till it included the “Wisdom of the East.” In personal habits he followed the Pythagorean discipline. He was a severe critic of the Gnostic beliefs then current, and he evidently included with them also the new Christian faith. His mysticism was spiritual and contemplative, and he regarded the ceremonial rites of the Egyptian theurgy with distrust. He favored Mithraism, which prevailed in Asia, while Iamblichos belonged rather to the cult of Serapis, which was the State religion of Egypt.

Of Anebo we know little. He is addressed as an Egyptian priest, and his name is that of Anabu or Anubis, the Egyptian psychopompos and patron of sacred literature. He was a “prophet” hen niter or servant of divinity, and expounder of the oracles: and Porphyry himself an “epoptes” or initiated person, asks him accordingly to explain the Egyptian theosophic doctrines respecting the divine beings, rites and religious faith.

2. The Theosophers were regarded as learned in the arcane knowledge, and especially in Theurgy. Iamblichos appears to have adopted these Rites and usages from the Egyptian worship, including with them a philosophic groundwork from the Platonic doctrines.

3. The use of images and emblems of a sacred character to typify divine power and energy is universal. Somewhat of the divine was supposed to inhere in them. The "images" and asheras or "groves" mentioned in the Bible were of this character. So was the "idol in a grove," made by Queen Maachah, as well as the simulacra which, as Herodotus states, the Egyptian women carried at the festivals.

4. Compare Gospel according to Matthew, XI, 12. "From the days of John the Baptist till now, the kingdom of heaven is forced, and they who are violent seize it."

5. Xenokrates, who was a disciple of Plato, himself taught these doctrines. He considered the heavens as divine and that the substance of the divine nature was mind pure and absolute. He also described the stars as "visible divinities." The demons were depicted as of a psychic nature, subordinate to that of the gods, and therefore subject to emotion and perturbation like human beings, while at the same time sharing in a degree in the power and intelligence of the gods.

6. Greek, the mind or "rational soul," the essence or principle of intelligence which transcends the understanding or reasoning faculty, and is capable of knowing truth intuitively and instinctively from being itself of divine origin.

7. Here Porphyry has given an ancient classification of spiritual beings into four orders, the gods, demons or guardians, the heroes or half-gods, and souls. There were other distinctions in the Eastern countries, and we find Abammon, the Teacher, adding to these the archangels, angels, and archons of both the higher and lower nature. These were named in several of the Gnostic categories that were extant at that period. "We have no conflict with blood and flesh," says the Christian apostle, "but with archonates, authorities, the world-rulers of this dark region, and spiritual forces of evil in the upper heavens."

8. By "essence" is signified the underlying principle of being; by "power" the intermediate agency; and by "energy" the operative faculty which enables actual results.

9. This inquiry in regard to the apparitions which the candidates beheld at the initiation is made plainer by Proklos: "In the most sacred stages of the Perfective Rites," says he, "before the gods come into view, there appear intrusive figures of demons of the Underworld, to draw away the attention of the candidate from the spotless Good to the gross and material." It may be pertinent to add that in the several Grottoes or Halls of Initiation there was machinery ingeniously constructed for the purpose of representing divine and other personages. See *The Epicurean*, by Thomas Moore, and *The Great Dionysiac Myth*, by Robert Brown, Jr., VI, 2, 3.

10. "I do not see any sin in the world," says George Sand, "But I see a great deal of

ignorance.”

11. Greek, epiphany – an apparition or manifestation, such as was exhibited in mystic and theurgic rites.

12. Goeteia (goetia), or “black magic.”

Chapter 1. Letter of Porphyry to Anebo¹³. The agurtes or begging priest generally belonged to the worship of Rhea or Cybele, the Mother. He is frequently depicted in a most unfavorable light. Apuleius speaks of a company of these emasculate priests in the eighth book of the *Metamorphoses*. They are also described in the *Republic* of Plato: “Agurtæ and Mantics frequent the houses of the rich and persuade them that they possess a power granted by the gods to expiate, by sacrifices and chants any unjust act that has been committed and that they induce the gods by blandishments and magic rites to help them. They collected money in this way, and they also followed the selling of nostrums and telling of fortunes.”

14. This paragraph is taken from Part V, Chapter I, and is not found in the text of the Letter as we have it. It is quoted there as belonging in this place. In the original Greek text the preceding paragraph appears in unbroken connection with the one which follows, and in dividing them we find it necessary to add a clause, to introduce the subject.

15. Greek, an epopt, seer, or beholder; a person admitted to the higher degree of initiation. “The Perfective Rite leads the way as the muesis or mystic initiation,” says Proklos, “and after that is the epopteia or beholding.” Theôn describes it as three degrees – “the Purification, Initiation, and Beholding of the Divine Vision.” Mr. Robert Brown, Jr., explains the last of these very fully. “This is the Autopsia or Personal Inspection, the Crown of Mysteries, the Epopteia or Divine Beholding, and he becomes an Epoptes or Contemplator.” (*Great Dionysiak Myth*, VI, 2, 3.) As the Autoptic Visions are the principal topic in this work, the term “Beholder” is adopted uniformly for several words of the same import.

16. As the term “Egyptian” is applied only in this work to individuals of sacerdotal rank, the designation of “priest” is added. The Hierogrammateus, or Scribe of the Temple, was a priest of the lower class, and his duty was to keep the records, teach students the religious observances, and take care that they were duly obedient. The prophets were superior to the Scribes. The Temples of Egypt, like those of Babylonia, were seminaries for instruction, and all departments of Science and philosophy were included in their teachings as being Sacred Learning.

17. Greek, hulé; a term first adopted by Aristotle to signify the objective, negative or passive element upon which the Creative energy operates. Plato named it the “receptacle,” as containing the creative energy and making it effective.

18. Plutarch comments somewhat severely upon this mode of interpretation. In his treatise *On Isis and Osiris* he remarks that some individuals do not scruple to say that

Osiris is the Sun, Isis no other than the Moon, and that Typhon is fire, or drouth, or the Ocean. But he adds in rebuttal: “No one can rationally imagine that these objects can be gods in themselves; for nothing can be a god that is either without soul, or under the power of natural objects.” He also remarks that “there is an excellent saying among philosophers, that they who have not learned the true sense of words will also mistake in the things that are meant.”

19. Greek, oikoresmotys: Hebrew, Baal Zebul. In astrology a “house” is a twelfth part of the sky as marked out for the purpose of horoscopes. Every sign of the Zodiac thus had a “house,” which a planet or planetary genius was considered as occupying, and thence ruling the days and events of the month to which it belonged.

20. Compare First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, V, 23: “Spirit and soul and body.”

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Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries

Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

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Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.
Part I. The Gods and their peculiarities
Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos
Introduction

Hermes ¹, the patron of literature, was rightly considered of old to be a god common to all the priests ² and the one presiding over the genuine learning relating to the gods, one and the same among all. Hence our predecessors were wont to ascribe to him their discoveries in wisdom and to name all their respective works Books of Hermes.

If, therefore, we participate in this god ³, of the measure which has fallen to us and become possible to us, thou dost well to propose these questions in regard to the Divine Sciences to the priests as to friends for an accurate solution. Having good reason therefore for considering the letter sent by thee to Anebo, my pupil, as having been written to myself, I will answer thee truly in regard to the matters about which thou hast enquired. For it would not be becoming that Pythagoras, Plato, Demokritos, Eudoxos, and many others of the old Greeks, should have obtained competent instruction from the temple-scribes of their own time ⁴, but that thou who art contemporary with us, and having the same disposition as they, should be turned away by those now living and recognized as public teachers.

Accordingly, I myself engage thus in the present discussion. Thou, if thou dost so choose, art at liberty to consider the person who is now writing to thee as the same

individual to whom thou hast sent thy letter. If, however, it shall seem to thee more proper, then regard the individual who is discoursing with thee in writing to be one or some other prophet of the Egyptians, for this is not a matter worth differing about. Or, as I think still a better way, let it pass unnoticed whether the person speaking is of inferior or superior rank, and direct the attention solely to the things that are uttered, thus arousing the understanding to eagerness simply as to whether that which is said be true or false.

In the first place, let us take the subjects separately in order to ascertain the scope and quality of the problems which are now proposed for discussion. Next let us examine in detail the theories respecting divine matters from which thy doubts were conceived, and make a statement of them, as to the sources of knowledge by which they are to be investigated.

Some which are badly jumbled together require to be taken apart; while others have relation to the Divine Cause through which everything exists, and so are readily apprehended. Others which we might put forward according to a certain plan of exhibiting contradictory views, draw out the judgment in both directions; and there are likewise some which demand from us to explain the whole of the Initiatory Rites.

Such being the facts, our answers are to be taken from many places and from different sources of knowledge. Some of these introduce fundamental principles from the traditions which the sages of the Chaldaeans delivered; others derive support from the doctrines which the Prophets of the Egyptian temples teach; and some of them follow closely the speculations of the Philosophers and elicit the conclusions which belong to them. And now there are some of these which involve an unbecoming dispute from diverse notions that are not worthy of a word; and others that have their origin from prejudices common to human beings. All these, therefore, are to be disposed of in various ways by themselves, and are in many ways connected with one another.

Hence, on account of all these things, there is some discussion necessary for the directing of them properly.

PLAN OF THE DISCUSSION

We will, therefore, set forth to thee the hereditary opinions of the Assyrian Sages ⁵ in regard to the True Knowledge, and will show thee in plain terms our own. Some things in the Gnosis will be brought into the discussion from the innumerable arcane writings, and the rest will be from the works upon the entire range of Divine Matters, which the old compilers have collected into a book of limited dimensions.

If, however, thou wouldst propose some philosophic question, we will determine it for thee according to the ancient Tablets of Hermes ⁶, which Plato and Pythagoras, having studied thoroughly beforehand, combined together in Philosophy.

But questions that are foreign to the subject, or that are disputatious and exhibit a contentious disposition of mind, we shall tone down gently and aptly, or else show their

impropriety. So far also as they go in the line of common ways of thinking we shall try to discuss them in a familiar manner. Those, likewise, which require the experiences of the Divine Dramas ⁷ for an intelligent understanding we will, as far as it is possible, explain by words alone ⁸; but those which are likewise full of intellectual speculation will be shown to be effective for purifying (from the earthly contamination).

It is possible, however, to tell the signs of this which are worthy to be noted, and from these both thou and those who are like thee in mind can be brought near to the very essence of things that have real being ⁹.

So far, however, as they may be actually known through words, none of these matters will be left without a perfect demonstration, and in reference to everything we shall give thee carefully the proper explanation. Those which relate to divine matters we will answer as theologists; and those which pertain to Theurgy we will explain theurgically. Those of a philosophic character we will search out with thee as philosophers, and such as extend to the Primary Causes we will bring forth into light following the argument together according to first principles. Such, however, as pertain to morals or final results we will determine properly according to ethical form; and other questions, in like manner, we will treat according to their proper place in the arrangement.

We will now proceed to thy questions.

TWO FORMS OF KNOWING

Thou beginnest accordingly by saying: "In the first place, it is to be taken for granted that there are gods." Speaking in this way is not right. For the inborn knowledge in respect to the gods is coexistent with our very being, and is superior to all judging and deciding beforehand. Indeed, it is preexistent both to argument and demonstration, and is united interiorly from the beginning to its own divine cause and is coexistent with the inherent longing and impulse of the soul to the Good ¹⁰.

If, however, we must speak truly, the conjoining to the divine nature is not knowing, for this is kept separate after a manner by an otherness. ¹¹

Prior to this knowing, however, which is as of one individual having knowledge of another, the intimate union as in a single concept is self-originated and indistinguishable. Hence we ought to concede the point as though possibly it might not be granted, not to assume it as a matter of uncertainty'. for it always existed simply in energy. Nor is it proper to put it to proof in this way as though we had authority to judge and reject ; for we are ourselves encompassed in it, or rather we are filled by it, and the very selfhood which we are we possess in this knowing of the gods ¹².

I have, moreover, the same thing to say to thee in regard to the Superior races which come next in order after the gods. I mean the demons, heroes, and uncontaminate souls ¹³.

For it is always necessary to bear in mind respecting these subordinate races that they have one defined form of essence; also that we put aside from our conception of them the indefiniteness and instability which are incident to the human constitution and renounce the tendency to incline to the other side which arises from attempts to counterbalance the opposition of the arguments. For such a thing is foreign to the principles of reason and life, but is derived from secondary sources, such even as belong to the power and contrariness of the realm of generated existence. It is necessary, however, to treat of them as being of a uniform nature.

Let it be admitted, then, that with the companions of the gods ¹⁴ in the eternal region there is the innate perception of them.

Therefore, even as they have their being always after the same manner, so also the human soul is conjoined to them by Knowledge according to the same principles; never by any conjecture, opinion or reasoning which have their beginning in Time pursuing the essence which is beyond all these, but by pure and faultless intuitions which it received out of eternity from the gods being conjoined with them in these principles.

Nevertheless, thou seemest to consider the knowing of divine beings to be the same as the knowing of other matters, and likewise that a point may be taken for granted from opposing arguments, as is usual in debates. But there is no such similarity. For the perceiving of them is absolutely distinct from everything of antithetic character. It is not made valid by being now conceded or by coming into existence, but on the other hand it is a single concept, and coexisted with the soul from eternity.

I say such things to thee, therefore, in regard to the first principle in us, at which it is necessary for those to begin who would both speak and hear anything whatever concerning the superior races or about ourselves.

PECULIARITIES OF THE SUPERIOR RACES

Then follows thy question: "What are the peculiarities of the Superior races by which they are differentiated from each other?" If by peculiarities thou meanest differences as of species under the same genus, which are distinguished by opposite characteristics, as rational and irrational under the head of animal, we by no means admit the existence of such differences in beings that neither have one common essence ¹⁵ nor characteristics diverse from one another, nor have received an organization from a common source which is undefined and yet defines the peculiarity.

If, however, thou supposest the peculiarity to be a certain simple condition limited in itself, as in primary and secondary races, which differ in their entire essence and in the whole genus, thy notion of the peculiarities is reasonable. For these peculiarities of beings that always exist will all be in some manner set apart, separate and simple.

The questioning, however, is going forward to little purpose, for it behooves us, first of all, to ascertain what the peculiarities are in regard to essence, then in regard to power, and so, after that, what they are in regard to energy. But as thou hast now put the

question in reference to certain peculiarities which distinguish them, thou speakest only of the peculiarities of energies. Hence thou askest the difference in them in respect to the last things as mentioned, but art passing over unnoticed, without questioning, the first, and, as relating to the elements of variableness, the most important of them.

Moreover, there is something added in the same place in regard to "active or passive motions." This is a classification not at all proper as relates to the superior races; for in none of them is there the contrast of active and passive, but certain of their energies are to be contemplated as unconditioned, unrestrained, and without relation to anything opposing. Hence we do not admit in regard to them that there are such motions as active and passive in respect to the soul. For we do not concede self-motion from moving and being set in motion; but we suppose that there is a certain unique self-originating motion which is its very own, and not an aptitude derived from an outside source taking from it action in itself and a passive condition by itself. Who, then, may admit in respect to the races superior to the soul that they are to be distinguished by the peculiarities of active and passive motions? ¹⁶

Further, therefore, that expression which is added, "or things consequent," is inconsistent with their nature. For in the case of those of composite nature, and of those that exist together with others or in others, or that are encompassed by others, some are conceived of as leading and others as following, some as being themselves essences and others as contingent upon essences. For there is an arrangement of them in regular order, and there intervenes unfriendliness and disagreement between them. But in regard to the superior races, they are all to be considered as self-subsisting. The perfect ones take rank as chiefs, and are separate by themselves, and neither have their substance from others or in others. Thus there is nothing about them that is "consequent." In no respect, therefore, is their peculiarity characterized from these.

And now there occurs at the end of the question the natural distinction. The question is whether the essences are to be known by energies, physical motions, and things consequent. Everything, however, is to the contrary. For as the energies and motions made up the actual substance of the essence, they would themselves likewise be dominant in regard to their difference. If, however, the essences generate the energies, being themselves previously separate, then they impart to the motions, energies, and things consequent, that which constitutes the differences. This mode, therefore, is contrary to what is supposed in the present bunt to find the peculiarity.

In short, however, whether thou imaginest that there is one race of gods and one of demons, and in like manner of heroes (or half-gods), and after the same course of things, of unbodied souls, or whether thou supposest that there are many races in each category, thou demandest that the distinguishing of them shall be according to peculiarities. For if thou supposest each race to be a unit, the whole arrangement of divine orders according to the more perfect classification ¹⁷ is overturned; however, they are defined by these according to race, as it may seem satisfactory, and there is not among them one common definition in relation to essence except that those that are prior are distinguished from the inferior races, it is not possible to find out their

common boundaries. And even though it should be possible, this very thing takes away their peculiarities. Hence the object which is sought is not to be found in this way. He, however, will be able to define their peculiarities who reasons upon the analogous sameness in the higher orders; as, for example, with the many races among the gods, and again with those among the demons and half-gods, and lastly with souls. hence it has been demonstrated by us through this argument what is the right course of the present investigation, its limitation, and how it is possible for it to be made.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE SUPERIOR ORDERS

Let us next proceed with the answers, one after another, to the questions which have been asked. There is then the Good: both that which is beyond essence and that which exists through essence. I am speaking of that essence which is the 'most ancient and most to be revered, and which, as to is incorporeal. ¹⁸ It is a special peculiarity of the gods, and is characteristic of all the races that are included with them; and hence, not being divided from this, but existing in like manner the same in them all, it preserves their peculiar distribution and arrangement.

SOULS

But with souls that are ruling over bodies, that are occupied with the care of them, and that are placed in order apart by themselves in the eternal regions, before the transition to generated existence, there is not present either the essence of the Good, or the Cause (or Supreme Principle) of the Good which is prior to essence; but there comes from it a certain participation and habit of good, as we perceive that a sharing of beauty and virtue is very different from what we observe with human beings. For this is equivocal, and becomes manifest in complex natures as sole thing acquired. But the principle of goodness is established unchangeable and perpetual in the Souls. It never at any time goes away from itself, nor is it taken away by anything else.

DEMONS AND HEROES OR HALF-GODS

Such then being the case with the divine races, the first and the last (the gods and souls), let us consider the two races intermediate between these two extremes, namely: 1. That of heroes or half-gods, which not only ranks higher than the order of souls in power and virtue, moral beauty and greatness, and excels it in every good quality which is incident in souls, but is also closely joined to. them by the kindred relationship of a similar form of life. 2. The other, the race of demons, which is closely allied to the gods, yet is in a certain sense inferior to them, following as though it was not first in rank but accompanying in subservience to the good pleasure of the gods. This race causes the otherwise invisible goodness of the gods to become visible in operation, becoming itself both assimilated to it, and accomplishing perfect works that are like it. For then what was before unutterable in it is made capable of being uttered, what was without form is caused to shire forth in visible figures, whatever of it was beyond all reasoning is brought forth into plain words, and having already received the connate participation of beautiful gifts it bestows the same ungrudgingly, and transfers them to the races that rank after itself.

Thus these intermediate races complete the common bond of gods and souls and render the connection between them indissoluble. They not only bind these together in

one continuous series, from those on high to the very last, but they make the union of them all incapable of being separated and to be a most perfect blending and an equal intermingling of them all. They likewise, after a manner, cause an outgoing influence to go forth equally from the superior to the inferior races and a reciprocal one from subordinate races to those ranking above them. They also establish order among the more imperfect races, and likewise due proportions of the gift coming down from the better ones and of the reception which takes place; and having themselves received from above from the gods the causes or motives of all these, they make everything agreeable and suited in every respect to all.

Thou must not think, therefore, that this classification is a peculiarity of powers or of energies or of essence; nor art thou taking them separately, to inspect them one by one. Nevertheless, by extending the inquiry through all of them thou wilt complete the answer to what was asked in relation to the peculiarities of gods, demons and half-gods, and of those that are included in the category of souls.

Let us proceed again, by another line of argument. Everything, whatever it may be, and of whatever quality, that is united, that is firmly established in itself by unalterable law and is a cause among the indivisible essences – that is immovable, and so is to be considered as the cause of all motion – that is superior to all things and has nothing whatever in common with them – that is to be generally considered as wholly unmingled and separate, not only in being but in power and energy – every such thing should be ascribed to the gods as being worthy of them. But that which is already divided into a great member, that which can give itself to other objects, that which both receives from others the limitation within itself and is sufficient for the distribution among imperfect ones to make these complete, that nevertheless participates in the primary and life-giving motion ¹⁹ and has communion with all things self-existent and coming into existence, that receives a commingling of substances from them all and imparts a radiating influence from itself to all, and that extends these peculiar properties through all the powers, essences and energies in itself-all this, speaking what is true, we shall ascribe to souls, as being implanted in them.

THE INTERMEDIATE RACES

What shall we say, then, in regard to the intermediate races? I think from what has been said already that they are sufficiently manifest to every one; for they make complete the indivisible connection between the extreme races. ²⁰ Nevertheless, it is necessary to continue the explanation. I assume, accordingly, the race of demons to be a multitude in one, to be commingled in an unmingled manner, and to accept the lower races as associated with a distinct concept of the most excellent. But on the other hand, I describe the race of heroes or demi-gods as being placed over more common distribution and multitude, and likewise over action and commingling, and matters akin to these. It also receives gifts from above, transcendent, and as though concealed within – I mean union, purity of nature, stable condition, and undivided identity and superiority over others. For each of these intermediate races is next to one of the extreme races beyond – one to the first and the other to the last. It follows as a natural result that by a continued series of kindred relations the demonian race, beginning from the highest in rank, proceeds to the lower races, and that the other, having primarily a

connection with the last of them all, should in some way have communication with those that are superior.

Hence there may be perceived the complete joining to gather into one of the first and last races (the gods and souls) through the intermediates (the demons and half-gods), and the entire sameness of nature, alike equally in substance, and also alike in power and energy. ²¹ Whereas, therefore, we have made the classification of the four races in these two ways perfectly complete, we think it sufficient in regard to the others that for the sake of brevity, and because that which remains – the comprehending of the intermediate tribes – is in a measure already plain, we exhibit only the peculiarities of the extreme races. Hence we shall pass over the intermediate tribes as being already well known, and make a sketch of the others in some way in very few words.

Notes:

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.1. Hermes is here the same as the Egyptian divinity, Thoth or Tahuti, the god of learning and medicine. He was regarded as the Scribe or recorder who registered the actions of the dead and living, so that they “were judged out of those things which were written in the books.” He was also the revealer of the divine will to men. His name Tahuti signifies “thrice great” or “very great,” or Trismegistos, Greek.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.2. The priests in Egypt consisted of many orders, including those who performed the Rites, the learned profession which included prophets, philosophers, poets, authors, physicians, artists, master mechanics, and also embalmers of the dead.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.3. This form of expression extends through this entire book. Though hardly familiar to us, it was formerly common in philosophic writings. The gods being spiritual essences, it was very properly considered that their worshipers would participate in their substance as we partake of the air that we inhale. In this way their powers and virtues were supposed to be imparted to the recipients. This treatise accordingly mentions the gifts received by the persons initiated at the telestic or Theurgic Rites, as a participating of the gods. The fact that they represent or personify qualities rather than individualities makes this mode of speaking eminently proper.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.4. In archaic periods, the worship and literature of every people was exclusive. Every repast being accompanied by religious ceremonies, the Egyptians would not eat with foreigners. Ashmes II broke through this restriction and made treaties of friendship and commerce with several Grecian and Ionian States. By his command, and at the instance of Polykrates of Samos, a tyrant-king, Pythagoras was admitted to instruction at the temples, and formally initiated into the sacerdotal caste. After the Persian conquest others resorted to Egypt for similar purposes; among them Plato, Demokritos, Archimedes, Chrysippos, Euripides.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.5. It is evident that there was a Gnosis, or Sacred Doctrine common to the religions of the principal countries, and that its focus was at Babylon. Compare Jeremiah LI. 7 and Revelation XVII. Iamblichos lived chiefly at Khalkis In Syria, and was familiar with the magi and learned men of Persia and Assyria. Hence as Abammon he refers the Gnosis to that region.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.6. The Stellae, Pillars or Tablets of Thoth, appear to be little else than a figurative expression for the sacred learning in possession of the Sacerdotal Caste in Egypt. When we call to mind that the Pyramids in that country, before their spoilation, were cased all over with tablets of stone on which hieroglyphic writing was engraved, we shall the better apprehend the significance of the allusion of Abammon.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.7. Greek, ergatheia divine works or performances; the exhibitions at the Mystic Rites. As these were dramatic representations to prefigure experiences of a spiritual character, we substitute the term "drama" as more likely to afford a clearer conception of the meaning. Element designated the Eleusinic "drama."

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.8. Mr. Gale, editor of the Greek text of this work as published at Oxford, was of the opinion that the reading of the original was corrupt, and suggested an emendation which may be rendered as follows: "It is impossible to explain by mere words." This would be in harmony with the statement in the Second Pauline Epistle to the Corinthian believers: "He was carried suddenly to paradise and heard things ineffable which it is not permitted to a human being to utter familiarly."

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.9. Plato and his disciples employ the principle or being to denote the Absolute Divinity; also the phrase ontws on real being or that which really is or has being, as contrasted with the "genesis" or objective existence.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.10. It was the practice of the philosophers to make use of abstract terms to represent the Supreme and Absolute. Of this character are to agaqon the Good; to alhqes the True, o eis the One.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.11. Power and energy are thus distinguished from their result. Damaskios remarks that "where there is not otherness, there will be no knowing. A union or conjunction, as of one to another, is superior to knowledge." Plato taught, says Professor Cooker, that man longs for the good, and bears witness by his restlessness and disquietude; that he instinctively desires it, and that he can find no rest and satisfaction in anything apart from the knowledge and participation of the Supreme Absolute Good.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.12. The Chaldaean Oracles quoted by Damaskios declare that “the prolific fountain of souls is encompassed by the two Minds.” He adds that “the fiery signals which draw down the ripe ones are in God,” which Simplikios explains: “The Unbodied ones are the supreme Mind and God being Source and Cause.”

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.13. Damaskios described the “demons” as tutelary spirits of a nature essentially divine. They were said to have charge of the oracles and worldly affairs generally. The “heroes” or demigods were a lower race in the order of emanation. The term denotes the son of a divinity, with a human parent. Uncontaminated souls are such as are not impure from the attraction of the genesis or domain of phenomenal existence.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.14. The Platonic philosophers before Iamblichos taught that the many gods are the “outshinings” or emanations of the one Superessential Deity and not substances complete of themselves. The Ancient Sadducees are said to have held a similar opinion, not denying the actual existence of angels and spirits, but that they existed permanently by inherent energy. The same sentiment appears in the ninety-fifth (ninety-sixth) Psalm. The Chaldaean Oracle, however, declared that “Not from the eternal source did anything run forth incomplete.”

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.15. Plato defines essence as that which has “real being,” and describes it as “colorless, formless, and intangible, visible only to the mind or higher reason that guides the soul.”

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.16. Plato bases upon this fact the immortality of the soul. The soul originates its own action and receptivity by volition. This volition is self-motion, and is that quality of moral freedom which has placed human beings above and apart from the animal tribes.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.17. In the Assyrian or Chaldaean Plan of Divine Orders, the following are instanced by Damaskios: 1. The Intellectible Gods. 2. The Hyparchs or superior archons. 3. The Archons. 4. The Archangels. 5. The Azoni or unclassified who belong to no defined jurisdiction. 6. Local Genii. This arrangement is hinted at in Part VIII, § 2.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.18. This is the common dogma of every ancient faith. In the Hindu category, the Brahman is the Good which is beyond essence and absolute, while Brahmá is identical with essence. The Parsis acknowledge Zurvan, the Unlimited, and Ahura Mazda, the Divine Creator. The Egyptian priests worshipped Amun, the hidden One, and Ptah, the Demiurgos or Architect of the Universe.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.19. Iamblichos is generally regarded as here endeavoring to reconcile the apparent discrepancy between Plato and Aristotle – the latter described the soul as immovable,

and Plato as self-moving, in which statement he refers to operation and not to essence. Syrianos explains that the soul is self-moving because it is set in motion from itself and certainly not by an agent inferior to itself. Proklos adds that the soul is self-moved in respect to the body and things of sense which plainly are set in motion from without themselves.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.²⁰ The gods above and the souls below, angels, demons and demigods.

Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.²¹ This distinction of principles is noted in the Chaldaean Oracles. Pythagoras indicates the same by the terms monad, duad, triad; Plato by peras, apeiron, and mikton; Damaskios by the One, the many, and the union. Another version of the Oracles in place of "Substance" has Father, and for "energy" Mind or Reason.

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Chapter 3. The Superior Races
Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos
PECULIARITIES OF THE GODS AND SOULS

In regard to the extreme races (the gods and souls) the former is chief, superior and perfect; the other is inferior and imperfect. The former can do all things at once uniformly and now; but the other is neither able to do anything completely nor immediately; neither speedily nor individually. The former generates all things and is guardian over them; but the latter has a natural disposition to yield and to turn submissively toward what it generates and has under guardianship. The former, being the original cause, has preeminence over all; but the latter, being dependent upon the pleasure of the gods as from a cause, is coexistent with it from eternity. The former in a single decisive moment grasps the ends of all the energies and essences; but the latter passes from some things to others and goes forward from the imperfect to the perfect. Further still, there exists with the former the highest and unlimited, superior to all measurement, and so completely formless as to be circumscribed by no formative principles; but the latter is dominated by impulse, habit and inclination, and is held fast

both by longings for that which-is inferior and by being familiar with things of a secondary character. At length it is moulded in various ways and proportions from them. Hence MIND, the leader and king of the things that actually are, the demiurgic art of the universe, is always present with the gods in the same manner, completely and abundantly, being established in itself unalloyed according to one sole energy. But the soul partakes of divisible and multiform mind, ¹ adapting itself to the supreme authority over all. It also takes care of unsouled beings, having been itself born into various forms at different times. From the same causes, order itself and beauty itself are coexistent with the Superior races; or if it is desired so to express it, the First cause is coexistent with these. But with the soul the allotment of intellectual order and divine beauty is always associated. With the gods, the measure of all things, or rather the cause of it, is perpetually coordinate; but the soul is confined to the divine limit and only participates of this in a limited degree. With good reason there may be ascribed to the gods dominion over all beings, by the power and supreme authority of the First Cause; but the soul has defined limits within which it can have command.

Such being the different peculiarities of the races at the highest and lowest extremes, what we have now been saying may be understood without difficulty, and also the peculiarities of the intermediates, the demons and half-gods; these being each next to one of the extremes, resembling both and going out from both to the intermediate region, and so effecting a harmonious union by commingling them and joining them together in due proportions.

Let such, then, be considered the peculiarities of the first divine races.
DISTINCTIONS OF THE SUPERIOR RACES

Surely we do not admit the distinction of the Superior races to be what is suggested by thee: "a classification established by difference of bodies, the gods being distinguished by ætherial bodies, the demons by aërial bodies, and souls by bodies pertaining to the earth." Such an arrangement would be like the assigning of Sokrates to a tribe when he was a Prytanis, ² and is not proper to be admitted in regard to the divine races, which are all by themselves, unbound and free. ³ To make bodies their own first causes, as to their specific nature, appears to be a fearful absurdity; for they are subservient to these causes and subject to the conditions of generated existence.

Further still, the races of Superior beings are not in the bodies, but govern them from outside. Hence they do not undergo changes with the bodies. Yet they give from themselves to the bodies every such good as the latter are able to receive, but they themselves receive nothing from the bodies. Hence they cannot have received from them any peculiarities. For if they were as habits of the bodies, or as material forms, or some other body-like quality, it might be possible for them, perhaps, to undergo change together with the different conditions of the bodies. But if they preexist separate from bodies, and unmingled with them, what rational distinction originating from the bodies can be developed in them?

In fact, this proposition in regard to these races makes the bodies actually superior to

the divine races, since by such a hypothesis they furnish a vehicle for the superior causes and fix in them the peculiarities incident to their essence. Nevertheless, it is plain that if the allotments, distributions and assignments of those that govern are arranged with those that are governed this authority will be given to the more excellent. For it is because those that are placed over others are such that they receive thereby such an allotment, and give this a specific character; but the essence itself does not become assimilated to the nature of the corporeal receptacle. ⁴

Hence I may speak as regards this subject in its turn, but a supposition of this kind must be admitted in respect to the imperfect soul. For such a mode of living as the soul projected, and such an ideal as was ready before entering into a human body, there is a corresponding organic body, joined to it and a similar nature which receives its more perfect life. ⁵

In respect to the superior races and those which as being universal include the origin of all, the inferior ones are produced in the superiors, the corporeal in the incorporeal, and, being encompassed by them in one circle, are governed by them. Hence the revolutions of the heavenly spheres ⁶ have been induced originally by the aetherial soul and are always inherent in it. The souls of the world also being extended to their own mind, are absolutely encompassed by it and primarily generated in it. In like manner also, the Mind, both that which is divisible (into attributes and qualities) and that which is entire, is included (as essential quality) of the superior races. Hence the secondary races, being always turned toward the primary, and the superiors leading the inferiors as exemplars, essence and ideal come to the lower races from those which are superior, and those which are ignoble are produced primarily in the more excellent. Hence, accordingly, order and proportion come from the latter to the inferior races, and these are what they are through the former. But there is no transmitting of peculiarities from the inferior races to those which precede them.

Such a classification, therefore, based on corporeal conceptions, is shown by these arguments to be false. Even though in this case it may seem otherwise to thee, the false assumption is not worthy of a word. Such a case does not exhibit abundant argument, but one belabors himself to no purpose if he puts forth hypotheses and then endeavors to refute them as not being true. For in what way is essence, which is absolutely incorporeal, having nothing in common with the bodies that partake of it, to be distinguished from such bodies? Not being in any way present with the bodies as a matter of place, how is it to be separated by places after the corporeal manner? And not being separated by circumscribed divisions of subject matter, how is it to be held in a divided condition by the divisions of the world? But what is more, what is there that can hinder the gods from going everywhere? What is there to hold their power in check, from extending to the vault of the sky? For this would be the work of a cause far mightier than the one shutting them in and circumscribing them within certain parts. Real being – that which truly is, and which is in itself incorporeal – is everywhere, wherever it pleases. Yet, as thou takest for granted, that which is divine and which transcends all things is itself transcended by the perfectness of the entire world, and is encompassed by it in a specific division, and hence is inferior in respect to bodily dimensions. Yet if there is no divine creation and no participation of divine ideals

extending through the whole world, I do not see, for my part, any opportunity for a creating and framing of them after specific forms.

In short, however, this opinion which banishes the presence of the superior races entirely from the earth is an abrogating of the Sacred Rites and theurgic communion of the gods with human beings. For it says nothing else than that the divine ones dwell apart from the earth, that they do not commingle with human beings, and that this region is deserted by them. Consequently, according to this reasoning we priests have never learned anything whatever from the gods, and since we differ in nothing from other men thou hast not done right in questioning us as though we knew more than others.

Not one of these statements of thine, however, is sound. For neither are the gods limited to parts of the earth, nor are the inferior races about the earth excluded from their presence. On the contrary, the superior races are characterized in this way: that they are encompassed by nothing and that they encompass all things in themselves. But those that belong to the earth have their being in the perfections (pleromas) of the gods, and when they become fit for the divine communion they at once, prior to their own essence, possess the gods that preexisted in it.

That this entire classification is false, that this plan of investigating peculiarities is irrational, and that the notion of distributing the gods each to a certain region does not permit the receiving of the entire essence and power which are in them, we have fully established. It would have been right, therefore, to omit the dissenting inquiry in regard to the distribution of the Superior races, as it contradicts nothing in regard to the true conceptions. On the other hand, our attention should be directed, instead, to the intelligent perception of matters relating to the gods, and not to the holding of a discussion with a man; and for this reason we shall adapt the present discourse to the disposing of subjects of probability and matters relating to the gods.

HOW DIVINE RACES ARE DISTRIBUTED

I assume accordingly that thou askest a solution of that matter of which thou seemest to be in doubt, namely: "As the gods dwell only in Heaven, why are invocations at the Theurgic rites directed to them as being of the Earth and Underworld?"

This position which is thus assumed at the beginning, namely: that the gods traverse heaven only, is not true; for the universe is full of them. But thou then demandest: "How is it that although possessing power unlimited, undivided, and unrestricted, some of them are mentioned as being of the water and of the atmosphere, and that others are allotted by definite limitation to different places and distinct parts of bodies? If they are actually separated by circumscribed limitations of parts, and according to diversities of places and subject-bodies, how will there be any union of them one to another?"

One most excellent solution of all these and an infinite number of similar questions is by a survey of the manner in which the gods are allotted.

This, then, is the explanation: Whether the allotment be to certain parts of the universe,

as to heaven or earth, whether to holy cities and regions, whether to certain temple-precincts or sacred images, the divine irradiation shines upon them all from the outside, just as the sun illuminates every object from without with his rays. Hence, as the light encompasses the objects that it illuminates, so also the power of the gods comprehends from without those that participate of it. In like manner, also, as the light of the sun is present in the air without being combined with it – and it is evident that there is nothing left in the air when the illuminating agent is removed, although warmth is still present when the heating has entirely ceased – so also the light of the gods shines while entirely separate from the objects illuminated, and, being firmly established in itself, makes its way through all existing things.

Still further, the light that is the object of perception is one, continuous, and everywhere the same entirety; so that it is not possible for a part of it to be cut off by itself, or to be enclosed in a circle, or at any time to remove itself from the source of illumination. According to the same principles, therefore, the whole universe, being susceptible of division, is distinguished with reference to the one and indivisible light of the gods. In short, this light is one and the same everywhere, and is not only present, undivided, with all things that are capable of participating of it, but it, likewise, by an absolute power and by an infinite superiority, fills all things, as a cause, joins them together in itself, unites them everywhere with itself, and combines the ends with the beginnings. The whole heaven, including with it the universe imitating this, goes around in a circular revolution, unites all to itself, and leads the elements whirling in a circle; and all things being in one another, and borne toward one another, it holds them together and defines their equal proportions; and guiding them to the remotest distances, makes the ends combine with the beginnings – as, for example, the earth with the sky – and effects a sole connection and accord of wholes with wholes.

Who, then, that contemplates the visible image of the gods thus united as one ⁷ will not have too much reverence for the gods, its causes, to entertain a different judgment and to introduce among them artificial divisions, arbitrary distinctions, and corporeal outlines? I, for one, do not think that any one would be so disposed. For if there is neither any analogy, nor scheme of proportion, nor interblending in respect to power or simple energy of that which is set in order with that which sets in order, ⁸ then I say that there is nothing existing in it, either of extension or in regard to distance, or of encompassing locally, or of division by due setting apart, or of any other such natural equalizing of qualities in the presence of the gods with beings inferior in their nature. For in natures that are homogeneous in essence and power, or that are in some manner of similar form or alike in race, there can be perceived an encompassing or holding fast. But in the case of those that are totally exempt from all these conditions, what opposing circumstance in respect to these things, or pathways through them all, or separate outline, or encompassing in some prescribed space, or anything of this kind, can be justly conceived? On the other hand, I think that they who are partakers of the gods ⁹ are, every one, of such a nature as to partake of them according to their own intrinsic quality, some as of the other, others as of the atmosphere, and others as of the water; which the technique of the Divine Performances recognizes, ¹⁰ and so makes use of the adaptations and invocations according to such a classification.

So much may be stated in regard to the distribution of the superior races in the world.
SUPERIOR BEINGS NOT CLASSIFIED AS PASSIVE AND IMPASSIBLE

After these distinctions thou suggestest another classification on thy own account, and separatest the essences of the superior races by the differentiation of "passive and impassible." I do not, however, by any means accept this classification. For no one of the superior races is passive, nor yet is it impassible in such a manner as to be thus contradistinguished from any that is susceptible, as being adapted by nature to receive impressions, or as freed from them through inherent virtue or some other excellent condition. On the other hand, it is on this account, because they are entirely exempt from the inconsistency of being either passive or not passive, because they are in no way susceptible to impression, and because they are unchangeably fixed in regard to essence, that I set them down in all these respects as impassive and unchangeable.

Consider, if thou art willing, the last one of the divine races, the soul pure from the defilement of bodies. Being superior to the realm of nature, and living the unbegotten life, what does it want of the generated life with sensual pleasure and of the restoration thereby into the realm of nature? ¹¹ Being outside of everything corporeal, and of the nature which is divisible in respect to the body, and being likewise entirely separate from the accord in the Soul which goes down into the body, why is it to participate of the pain that leads to decay and dissolution of the structure of the body? On the contrary, it has no occasion for the susceptibilities which are forerunners of sensation, for it is neither held at all in a body nor in any way environed by it so as to have occasion for bodily organs in order to perceive different bodies outside of these organs. In short, however, being indivisible, remaining in the one same form, being essentially incorporeal, and having nothing in common with the generating and susceptible body, it can be affected by nothing in regard to classification or transformation, nor in short has it any concern whatever with change or condition.

But on the other hand, whenever the soul comes into the body it is not itself, nor are the rational faculties which it imparts to the body susceptible to impression. ¹² For these are simple and single ideals, not admitting any disturbing element or entrancement, so far as relates to them. It is, therefore, the something that yet remains that is the cause of such experience to the composite nature. Nevertheless, the cause is not in any way the same as the effect. ¹³ Hence, the Soul being the first genesis and origin of the composite living beings that come into existence and pass to dissolution, is itself, so far as relates to itself, unbegotten and imperishable; so also those that participate of the soul are susceptible to impression and do not possess life and essence in their completeness, but are entangled in the indefiniteness and alien conditions of the realm of matter. ¹⁴ Yet the soul, as relates to itself, is unchangeable, as being in its own essence superior to impression, and as neither being moved by any preference inclining in both directions (passiveness and impassibility), nor as receiving an acquired versatility in the participating of habitude and power.

Since, therefore, we have shown, in respect to the last race of the superior orders, namely, the soul, that it is impossible for it to participate in any passive or

impressionable condition, how is it proper to attribute this participation to demons and half-gods who are sempiternal and follow the gods, and themselves according to their respective grades preserve, and likewise in their several places make the regular arrangement of the divine beings always complete, and do not leave any unoccupied space between the different orders? For this we know for certain: that the passive condition is not only undisciplined but also discordant and unstable, never being in any case its own master, but attached to that by which it is held fast and to which it is subservient in reference to the sphere of generated existence. This condition of passiveness, therefore, pertains to some other race rather than to one always existing and allied to the gods, not only maintaining the same arrangement but likewise going around the same circuit with them. Hence, therefore, the demons, and all who rank with them after the superior races, are impassible.

Notes:

Chapter 3. The Superior Races¹. The Chaldaean Oracles also recognize this twofold mind. The one, the Pure Reason or Intelligence, was placed over the first Triad. "The Mind of the Father named all things in threes, and governed them all by Mind." This mind they considered as sole, unparticipating, and essential. The other was described as participant and divisible into parts or qualities.

Chapter 3. The Superior Races². The Prytanis of Athens were fifty in number, and were selected from the Boulé or Senate. Sokrates, at the age of sixty, was chosen to that dignity.

Chapter 3. The Superior Races³. The Chaldaean Theology did not unequivocally describe all the gods as "unbound." The seven cosmokrators, or rulers of the world, the lords of the zodiacal houses and the cosmic gods assigned to regions of the world, were bound to their respective jurisdictions.

Chapter 3. The Superior Races⁴. The pre-existence of the soul in the eternal world, before becoming involved in the genesis and conditions of the earth-life, was generally believed. Even after being set free at death, it was supposed to be, after a period of less or greater length, again attracted back to the mundane sphere. Plato illustrates this by the Vision of Eros in the Republic. The choice of the earthly condition is made by the soul itself, and very generally it differs from what it had been in the preceding term of life in the world. "The cause is in him who makes the choice, and the divinity is without blame in the matter." Eros adds that after the souls had chosen their new lives according as they drew the lots, they all went in their order to Lachesis, and she gave to every one the demon that he had chosen, and sent the demon along with him to be the guardian genius of his life, and the accomplisher of the fate which he had chosen. Then he was born anew into the earth.

Chapter 3. The Superior Races⁵. The cause or incentive for the coming of the soul into generated life is variously explained by different writers. According to Plotinus, the universal soul does not come to a body as the body may come to it, nor does the body contain the soul, but is contained by it. Simplicios accepted the statement of Iamblichos,

that “the soul projects certain lives for itself.”

Chapter 3. The Superior Races⁶. The stars and planets were regarded as abodes or receptacles of souls.

Chapter 3. The Superior Races⁷. Plato affirms this in the *Epinomis*. “It is Heaven that we should honor,” says he; “it is the cause of all benefits to us.” Abammon, doubtless, alludes to Ra, of the Egyptian Pantheon, who was regarded as the source of light, and also as being the whole heaven united as one eikon and personality.

Chapter 3. The Superior Races⁸. Proklos reiterates this declaration, so often insisted upon, that the superior nature and essence can receive nothing from one that is inferior.

Chapter 3. The Superior Races⁹. Intelligent readers will understand from what has been said, that as the gods are spiritual essences, the partaking of them, or, in other words, of their irradiation, is analogous to the partaking of light. The luminance itself is in no way affected, but the partaker is filled and pervaded by it.

Chapter 3. The Superior Races¹⁰. This is the Theurgic Rite. “This Theurgy,” says Thomas Taylor, “is, doubtless, the same as the ‘Magic of Zoroaster,’ which was no ‘Black art,’ but a peculiar mode of worship.”

Chapter 3. The Superior Races¹¹. The soul was called by Damaskios, our last echo of Divinity. In the mundane region it was considered as not a whole and united essence, but as divided into qualities and traits of character.

Chapter 3. The Superior Races¹². Plotinus, using the comparison that the workman does not contract the imperfections of his tools, remarks that it is not necessary that the soul shall be itself affected by the conditions of the body. It simply uses the body as its instrument: It is incorporeal, and hence the passions and susceptibilities of the body do not penetrate into its substance, but only into its powers and energies.

Chapter 3. The Superior Races¹³. Proklos illustrates this by the analogy of a man viewing his own image in a stream of water. He is unchanged in his own person and individuality, but the image exhibits great perturbation. So the soul contemplates its own image as reflected in the body, and though it is itself impassible and unaffected, it may be perplexed by the incidental disturbances.

Chapter 3. The Superior Races¹⁴. Greek, *ulg*, wood, rubbish; the negative or inert quality called matter, from which natural objects proceed. Aristotle first adopted the term. Plato, unable to conceive of matter as substance per se, made use of terms signifying the “nurse” and the “receptacle” or passive force. The term “matter” is from *materia*, the mother-principle. The phrase “realm of matter” is adopted here, as the term implies a department in the universe, and not simply matter itself.

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“Why then, are many ceremonies performed histrionically in the Sacred Rites, as though the gods were moved by passion?”

I think that this is said without an intelligent understanding in regard to the Sacerdotal technique of the Mysteries. For of the ceremonies performed from time to time in the Sacred Rites, some have an ineffable cause and a divine principle; others are consecrated to the Superior beings from eternity as symbols are consecrated ¹; others preserve some other image, just as Nature, the Supreme Genetrix also from invisible concepts, molds visible semblances. Others are brought forward from some motive of veneration, ² or they are endeavors at figurative representation, or some concept of a family relationship. Some prepare us for something that is useful, or in some way purify and free our human passions, or turn away some of the evils that may be impending over us. Yet it may not be admitted that any part of the Holy Observance is performed to the gods or demons as to impressionable beings. For the essence which is subjectively everlasting and incorporeal is not of a nature to permit any change from the bodies (offered at the Rites. ³)

Not even though it be admitted that it has use especially of such a kind, would it ever need it from human beings in a religious service of this kind. It is supplied from itself, and from the nature (or feminine principle) of the world, and from the abundance which is in the genesis (or generative energy); and if it is permissible to say this likewise, it receives a sufficiency before it can be in any want, through the unfailing complete supply of the world and its own ample abundance, and because all the superior races are fully supplied with the good things pertaining to them respectively. Let there be, therefore, this general encouragement for us in regard to the worship of the uncontaminate races, that they are likewise affiliated by kindred relationship to the beings that are otherwise superior to us, and on this account the pure are attracted to the pure, and the impassive to the impassive.

Following every point in its turn, we remark that the planting of “phallic images” is a special representing of the procreative power by conventional symbols, and that we regard this practice as an invocation to the generative energy of the universe. On this account many of these images are consecrated in the spring, when all the world is receiving from the gods the prolific force of the whole creation. ⁴

I think, however, that the immodest language to which you refer, affords an illustration of the absence of moral virtues ⁵ in the realm of matter, and the unseemly

rudeness existing beforehand with the unformed elements that are to be organized. These being utterly destitute of orderly arrangement, are passionately eager for it, so to speak, to such a degree as they are conscious of the unbecoming condition of things around themselves. Hence, again, perceiving from the speaking of vile utterances, what is vile, they follow to the (divine) sources of the ideals and more beauties.

They accordingly not only turn aside from evil action, but through the words, it is manifest in its forms and changes the impulse to a contrary direction. ⁶

There is, however, still another reason of analogous character for these customs. The powers of the human passions that are in us, when they are barred on every side, become more vehement: but when they are brought into activity with moderation and reasonable measure, they are sufficiently delighted and satisfied, and becoming pure in consequence, are won over and set at rest. In the same way, likewise, in comedy and tragedy, when we behold the emotions of others, we repress our own, make them more moderate and are purified from them. In the Sacred Rites, also, we are, by certain spectacles and relations of ugly things, delivered from the harm that is likely to befall through the events represented by them. ⁷

Things of this character are brought into use, therefore, for the healing of the soul within us, the moderating of the evils which have become nature to it through the genesis ⁸ or nativity, and likewise for the sake of its unloosing and deliverance from its bonds. On this account, probably, Herakleitos names them "Remedies" ⁹ as being cures for terrible maladies, and restoring the souls sound from the experiences incident in the generated life.

WHAT THE INVOCATIONS ACCOMPLISH

But the objection is also made: "The invocations are made as to gods that are impressionable beings; so that it is implied that not the demons only are impressionable, but the gods likewise."

This, however, is not as thou hast supposed. For the illumination which is present through the invocations is self-appearing and self-subsisting; it is also far removed from the being attracted downward, and goes forth into manifestation through the divine energy and perfection, and it excels voluntary choice and activity by so far as the Divine Purpose of the Absolute Goodness is superior to the deliberately chosen of life. By such a purpose, therefore, the gods being gracious and propitious, give forth light abundantly to the Theurgists, both calling their souls upward into themselves, providing for them union to themselves in the Chorus, ¹⁰ and accustoming them, while they are still in the body, to hold themselves aloof from corporeal things, and likewise to be led up to their own eternal and noetic First Cause. ¹¹

From these Performances ¹² it is plain, that what we are now discoursing about is the Safe Return of the Soul, for while contemplating the Blessed Spectacles, ¹³ the soul reciprocates another life, is linked with another energy, and rightly viewing the matter, it seems to be not even a human, for the most blessed

energy of the gods. If, indeed, the upward way through the invocations effects for the priests a purifying of the passions, a release from the condition of generated life, and likewise a union to the Divine First Cause, why, indeed, does any one impute to it any of the passion? ¹⁴ For such invocation does not draw down beings that are impassive and pure, to that which is susceptible and impure. On the contrary, it makes us who had become impressionable through the generated life, pure and steadfast. ¹⁵

On the other hand, even the “favorable inclinations” do not bring the priests into union with the gods through a passive condition, but they open the way for an indissoluble communion through the attraction which binds the universe together. It is by no means, as the term seems to imply, an inclining of the mind of the gods to human beings, but on the contrary, as the truth itself will teach the adapting of the human intelligence to the participating of the gods, leading it upward to them, and bringing it into accord through persuasive harmonies. Hence, both the reverend names of the gods, and the other divine symbols, being of an elevating tendency, are able to connect the invocation with the gods. ¹⁶

Proklos also declares that “the gods are readily persuaded by invocations and enable the initiants to behold perfect, tranquil, and genuine spectacles.”
PROPITIATORY RITES

What is more, “the propitiations of anger” will be plain enough if we learn thoroughly what the anger of the gods really is. It certainly is not, as some imagine, an inveterate and persistent rage. On the contrary, so far as the matter relates to the gods, it is a turning away from their beneficent guardianship. We ourselves turn away from this just as we bring darkness upon ourselves by shutting away the light at noon-day and so rob ourselves of the priceless gift of the gods. Hence the “propitiation” can turn us to the participation of the superior nature, ¹⁷ lead us to the guardian fellowship of the gods, which we had cast from us, and bind to each other harmoniously both those participating and the essences participated. Hence so far is it from accomplishing its particular work through a passive condition, that it leads us to desist from any passionate and disorderly turning away from, the gods.

Nevertheless, because evil is present in the regions of the earth, ¹⁸ the “expiatory sacrifices” act as a remedy and prepare us so that no change or any passive condition may occur with reference to us. Hence, whether it is through the gods or demons that a result of this kind takes place, it appeals to them as helpers, averters of evil, and as saviors, and through them turns away every harm that may be liable to follow from what has occurred. Let it be understood that those superior powers that turn away the blows incident to the realm of nativity and nature, are not preventing them in any way through passive conditions.

Indeed, if anyone has imagined that the intercepting of the protecting influence may bring on some chance injury, the endeavor at persuading of the Superior races “through the expiatory sacrifices” recalling them to their generosity, and taking away the sense of privation, may be in every respect pure and unchangeable. ¹⁹

"THE NECESSITIES OF THE GODS"

Further still, we will consider what are called "the necessities of the gods." The whole fact is this: The "necessities" are peculiarities of the gods, and exist as pertaining to gods, not indeed as from without, nor as from compulsion; but, on the contrary, as the goodness is of use from necessity, so also are they likewise in every particular and they are not in any respect otherwise inclined. Such necessity is itself combined with a purpose ideally good and is the beloved consort of Love. ²⁰

It is not only the same and unalterable in the order pertaining to the gods, but because it is at the same time, and in like manner, circumscribed in one boundary, it abides in this and never goes out of it. For all these reasons the very contrary takes place to what was inferred. If in Theurgy there are really genuine powers of such a character as we have set forth, the conclusion is inevitable that the Divine Being is proof against enchantment, impassive and not to be compelled.

SUPPLICATIONS AND THEIR UTILITY

Nevertheless, after this, thou passest over to another classification of gods as contrasted with demons. For thou remarkest that "gods are pure mental essences," proposing the opinion as the basis of an argument, or telling it as acceptable to certain individuals. Then thou addest: "that the demons are psychic beings, participating of mind."

It is not hidden from me that these notions are entertained by many of the Grecian philosophers. ²¹ nevertheless, I do not think it proper to hide from thee the manifest truth, for all opinions of such a character are somewhat confusing. They carry the attention from demons to souls, for these are also partakers of mind; and they wander from the gods to mind that is non-material in respect to operation which the gods excel in every particular. Why, then, should we attribute these peculiarities to them, which are by no means exclusively theirs? This much will be sufficient in regard to this classification. Otherwise, so far as it may be thought worthy of a mention of such a kind, it is overmuch. But in regard to the matters of which thou art in doubt, they should have due attention inasmuch as they have to do with the sacerdotal function.

Having further affirmed that "pure mental essences are not to be charmed or mingled with things of sense," thou doubtest whether it is necessary to pray to them. On my part, I do not think it necessary to pray to any others. For that something in us that is divine, mental essence and one – or mental alone, if you choose to call it so – is then vividly aroused in the prayers, and when it is awakened it longs vehemently for its counterpart, and becomes united to the absolute perfection.

If, however, it appears incredible to thee that an incorporeal being hears a voice in any way, and there is need of a special sense and of ears in order that the things uttered by us in the prayers may be heard, thou art voluntarily forgetful of the superior powers of the Primary Cause, both in the perceiving of all things, and the encompassing of them at once in themselves. The gods certainly do not receive the prayers in themselves through faculties of sense, or through organs, but they encompass in themselves the full

purport and energies of the pious utterances, and especially of those which happen through the Sacred Rites to have been established and brought into one with the gods. For then the Divine essence itself is simply present to itself, and does not share the conceptions in the prayers as distinct from itself.

But thou affirmest that “the supplications which are offered are entirely foreign to the purity of mental substances.” Not at all: for it is on this very account, because we are excelled by the gods in power, purity, and everything, that it is most opportune to supplicate them even with exaggeration of speech. If we are judged by being compared to the gods, the consciousness of our own nothingness causes us to betake ourselves to supplication, and we are led from supplication to the object of supplication, and from the familiar intercourse we acquire a similarity to it, ²² and from imperfection we quietly receive the Divine Perfection. ²³

If, however, it is conceived that the sacerdotal supplications are inspired into human beings as from the gods themselves, that they are symbols or tokens of the very gods, and are recognized by the gods alone, and have likewise after a certain manner the same power with the gods, how may it be justly supposed that supplication of this kind is still a matter of the physical senses, but not divine and of the higher intelligence? Or, what may in any likelihood insinuate itself into it when the most excellent human morals cannot be easily made pure? ²⁴

“But,” it is remarked by thee, “the things that are offered are offered as to sensitive and psychic natures.” If, indeed, they consisted of corporeal and composite powers alone, or of such as pertained merely to the service of the physical organism, thou wouldst be correct. But since the offerings partake also of incorporeal ideals, special discourses, and simpler metres, the peculiar affinity of the offerings is to be considered from this point alone. And if any kindred relationship, near or far away, or any resemblance is present, it is sufficient for the union about which we are now discoursing. For there is not anything which is in the least degree akin to the gods, with which the gods are not immediately present and conjoined. It is not, then, as to “sensitive or psychic,” but actually to divine ideals and to the gods themselves, that the intimate union is effected so far as may be. Hence we have spoken sufficiently in opposition to this classification. CLASSIFICATION CRITICISED

The next thing in thy letter is the question, “Are gods separated from demons by the distinction of bodied and unbodied?” ²⁵

This distinction is much more common than the former one; but it is so far from indicating their peculiarities of essence, that it does not even constitute a reasonable guess in respect to them, or anything incident to them. For it is not possible from these things to apprehend intelligently whether they are living beings or beings without life, and whether they are deprived of life or do not need it at all. Besides, also, it is not easy to form a judgment as to how these terms are to be applied, whether in Common or in relation to many different things. If they are to be applied in common, if both a piece of writing and a period of time, a god and demons likewise, and also fire and water, are under the same class as being incorporeal, the distinction is absurd. If, however, they

are employed with reference to the chief differences, why, when thou speakest of incorporeal things, dost thou indicate gods rather than tokens; or when thou sayest "body" why should it not be taken to mean the Earth rather than demons? For this point is not itself defined, whether they have bodies as a part of themselves, or are carried by bodies as a vehicle, or make use of them on occasion, or encompass them, or are merely identical with the body.

Perhaps, however, it is not necessary to scrutinize this distinction critically; for thou dost not put it forward as thy own concept, but on the contrary, displayest it as the conjecture of others.

THE GODS OF THE SKY NOT CORPOREAL

We will, therefore, take up in place of this subject, the matter in relation to the present opinion, about which thou seemest to be in doubt. For thou hast proposed this question: "If only the gods are incorporeal, how shall the Sun, the Moon, and the luminaries visible in the sky, be accounted as gods?"

We reply: That they are not encompassed by the bodies, but that on the contrary, they encompass the bodies with their own divine lives and energies; also that they are not converted to the body, but possess the body which has been converted to the divine cause; and that the body does not interfere with their spiritual and incorporeal completeness, nor occasion any obstacle to it by intervening. hence it does not even require more attention, but follows (the divinities) after a manner spontaneously, and by its own motion, not needing a self-operating superintendence, but urging on by itself ²⁶ uniformly by the leading of the gods upward toward the One. ²⁷

If, however, it is necessary, we will say this: The body (of the divine guardian of the star) in the sky is very closely akin to the incorporeal essence of the gods. For the essence being one, the other is unique; that being undifferentiable this is undivided; that being unchangeable this is in like manner unchanged. ²⁸ But if even it is taken for granted the energies of the gods are after one ideal, the divine one in the sky has also a single orbit. Nevertheless it also imitates their sameness in respect or a perpetual activity constantly in the same manner, by the same impulses, according to one law and one order of arrangement; and also the life of the gods which is the life natural to the bodies in the aether. Hence, their body is not constituted of incongruous and different elements in the way that our body is composed; nor does their soul join with the body to bring out from two, one living being. On the contrary, the living forms of the gods in the sky are, in every respect, similar and united, and are likewise complete, uniform and uncompounded through their entire substance. For the superior divinities are always excelling in these respects, and the lesser ones being dependent upon the rule of those that are prior and never obtaining this rule for themselves, the whole are brought into one joint arrangement and one common activity, and are all of them, in a manner, incorporeal and wholly divine. Hence, wherefore the divine ideal predominates in them, and implants through them all everywhere, the same One universal essence.

So, therefore, the gods that are visible in the sky, are likewise all of them in a certain

sense, incorporeal.

THE GODS IN THE SKY NOT MALIGNANT

Thy next question raises a difficulty in another form "How is it that some of these gods are givers of good and others bring evil?"

This conjecture is taken from the casters of nativities, but it falls short of actual fact in every particular. For they all are not only good, but in like manner, also the causes and authors of benefits, and they likewise all revolve (in their orbits) with reference simply to the One God, according to the beautiful and good alone. Nevertheless the bodies which are subject to them, ²⁹ themselves possess extraordinary powers; some of these powers being firmly established in the divine bodies themselves; but others going forth from them into the productive principle of the world, even into the world itself, and likewise passing down in proper order through the whole realm of generation, ³⁰ and extending without impediant even to incomplete races.

In respect, therefore, to the powers which inhere in the bodies of the divine ones in the sky, there is no doubt that they are all similar. Hence it is left for us that we shall discourse upon those which have been sent down here, and which have become intermingled with the sphere of generated existence. They extend in the same way preservation of the universe, and encompass the whole realm of generated existence after the same manner. They are both impassive and unchangeable, although they are present in the changeable and passive. The realm of generated existence being of many kinds and constituted of things diverse in character, contends against the oneness and indivisible essence of the gods with its own contrary and factious nature, discordantly and factiously. But it admits the impassive essence after the passive manner; and in short it participates of them according to its peculiar nature and not according to their power. As, therefore, that which comes into existence partakes of real being, as by heredity, and the body receives the incorporeal essence after a corporeal manner, so likewise the natural and material bodies in the realm of generated existence, it may be, participate in a disorderly and discordant manner of the non-material and ætherial bodies, which are above the realms of nature and generated existence. They are absurd, therefore, who attribute color, figure and the sense of feeling to mental forms, because those that participate of them are of such a kind; and so are they also who impute malignity to the bodies in the sky because their participants are sometimes bad. For unless the one who is participating had some such aberration at the beginning, there would be no such communication. But if that which is imparted is received as being foreign and inimical, it may, perhaps, become as something different, and to those belonging about the earth, it is evil and disorderly. This participation, therefore, and the commingling of aura of the realm of matter with that of the non-material realm, becomes a cause of much essential diversity in the inferior races; and besides these, that which is given forth in one way, is received after another. Thus, for example, the aura of Kronos (Seb) is dense, but that of Arês (Mandu) is impulsive; ³¹ yet the passive generative receptacle in those belonging in the realm of matter receives the former according to its consolidation and coolness, but the latter according to the warmth beyond the usual condition. Hence do not corrupting influence and the disproportionateness come through the deviation of the recipients, which is productive

of inharmoniousness, pertaining to the realm of matter and impressionable? Hence the feebleness. incident to regions in the realm of matter and earthly existence, not being capable of the genuine power and absolutely pure life of the divine ones of the ætherial region, refers its own condition to the Primary Causes – just as though a person distempered in body and not able to endure the life-giving warmth of the Sun, should have the audacity to affirm from his own condition, the falsehood that the Sun is of no benefit to health or life.

Something of this kind, however, may be the case in the general order and constitution of the universe, as the same things may be the means of safety to the universe and to every one, through the completeness, both of the things that are possible and those by which they are possible, but are harmful to the imperfect through their specific lack of harmony. Likewise in the motion of the universe, the revolutions in like manner maintain order in every respect, but some one of the parts is injured now and then by another, as we see occurring in a dance. ³²

To repeat the statement once more, it is the natural tendency of partial and incomplete things to decompose and undergo change. It is not proper, however, to attribute this peculiarity to the universal and primary causes, either as being inherent in them or as extending from them into this lower region.

Hence, from considerations of such a nature, it is demonstrated that neither the gods (of the planets) in the sky themselves, nor their gifts, bring evil.

THE GODS HAVE ONE COMMON ESSENCE

Come, then, let us dispose of that question also: “What is the bond of union that connects the divinities in the sky, that have bodies, with the gods that are unbodied?”

This also is clear from what has been said already. For though as being incorporeal, intelligent and united, they ride upon the celestial spheres, they have their origins in the realm of mind, ³³ and comprehending their essential being as divine, they govern the whole sky by one infinite energy, and although present in the sky as existing separately, they conduct the perpetual revolutions by their solitary wills, and are themselves unmingled with sensation and coexist with the god of the realm of Mind.

It is proper, nevertheless, to examine the present question thoroughly. I state the proposition accordingly, that the images of the gods which are visible (in the sky) are from the divine models in the realm of Mind, and are engendered around them; ³⁴ and having come into existence they are established in these absolutely, ³⁵ and being extended to them, they have the likeness which has been produced from them. They are likewise wrought into another arrangement after a different manner. They are held here in connection with those models in one stable union, and the divine spiritual forms, which are present with the visible bodies of the gods, exist separately before them, but their noetic models unmingled and super-celestial remain permanently by themselves, all as one in their everlasting exaltation.

There is, therefore, the common indissoluble bond with reference to spiritual energies, but there is one also in the common participations of forms, since nothing separates these, and there is nothing intervening between them. Besides, the non-material and incorporeal essence, being neither parted by spaces nor by subject-bodies, nor marked off by delineations into separate parts, comes together at once, and coalesces into an absolute identity. The issuing forth of all from the One, the returning again into the One, and the absolute rule of the One in everything effect the communion of the gods themselves in the Cosmic world, with those that pre-exist in the realm of Mind.

Moreover, the conversion of the secondary to the superior spiritual beings and the bestowing of the same essence and power from the primary to the secondary gods, holds their association indissoluble in one. In regard to things of another quality, as for example, soul and body, and those of unlike kinds, such as material forms, and also of substances which are in some other way separated from each other, the natural union, which exists between them both, originates from the Powers above and is cast off in consequence of the limited periods of time. However far we may ascend in regard to the height and the unchangeable sameness of the divinities, who are first as to form and essence, and raise ourselves from imperfect beings to perfect, by this much the more do we find the union which is sempiternal, and likewise behold the self which is principle and dominant, ³⁶ possessing diversity and multitude around itself and in itself.

Inasmuch as the gods are all arranged as absolutely one, the primary and secondary races, even the many that are self-existent with them, preside together over the universe as one, everything in them is one, and the first, the intermediate and lowest races coexist as the One itself. Hence, in respect to these, it is of no use to enquire whence the One is brought into reciprocal relations with them all, for the self-same essence that is indeed in them is the one of their own substance. ³⁷ The secondary races not only remain together in the unity of the primary divinities, but the primary gods bestow upon the secondary races the oneness from themselves, and they all maintain the common bond of an indissoluble relationship to one another.

From the same cause, moreover, the gods that are entirely incorporeal are united with the gods (in the sky) that have bodies and are perceptible to the senses. For the gods that are visible are really outside of bodies, and therefore are in the world of Mind; and those of the world of Mind, through their unconditioned unity, encompass the visible divinities within their own substance, and both are established by a common union and a single energy. In like manner, also, this is characteristic of the cause and arrangement of the gods, and for this reason this very oneness of them all extends from above to the very last in the order of divine beings. Suppose, however, that this seems to be a statement to be doubted, the contrary supposition, that there is nothing of the kind, would be matter of wonderment.

So much may be declared in regard to the bond which unites the gods, that are established in a manner perceptible to the senses, with the gods of the world of Mind.

OTHER MODES OF DISTINGUISHING

After this, however, thou takest up again the very questions in regard to which the things which have been stated already will suffice amply for a solution. Since, however, as the saying is, it is necessary to tell and examine often the things which are beautiful, we will not pass these matters by as having received sufficient answer, but by pounding away repeatedly with arguments we may perhaps get out of them all some complete and important benefit in true knowledge. For thou art still in doubt, as the question shows: "The gods that are visible (in the sky) being included in the same category with the invisible, what distinguishes the demons from the visible, and likewise the invisible gods?"

Beginning at this starting point, I will set forth the difference. It is because the gods in the sky are united with the gods in the world of Mind, and have the same idea or principle of existence with them; but the demons are far distant from them in essence, and scarcely compare with them in any resemblance. On this account they are distinct from the visible divinities, while they differ from the invisible gods in regard to the difference of their peculiar invisibility. For the demons are indeed imperceptible to sight, and in no way to be apprehended by a sense; but the gods are beyond the scope of the knowledge and perception incident to the realm of matter. Because they are in these respects unknowable and invisible, they are so named, or it may be in a sense very different in respect to the demons that they are described as invisible. What, then, do the invisible gods have, so far as they are invisible, which is superior to the gods that are seen in the sky? Nothing at all. For the divine quality, whatever it may be, and whatever allotment it may have, possesses the same power and dominion over all subordinate things. Even if they were visible they would not be subordinate to the invisible daemons, and though they were to belong to the Earth, they would reign over the demons of the air. For neither the place nor the part of the world that may receive it, makes any change in the Supreme authority of the gods; but the entire essence of the gods, indivisible and unchangeable, which all the inferior races in the order of nature revere in like manner, remains everywhere the same.

Setting out from the same point of beginning, we also find another difference between them. For the visible and invisible gods concentrate in themselves the whole government of existing affairs, both in regard to the sky and world, and in relation to the entire invisible forces of the universe. But those that are allotted to authority among the demons, extending it over certain prescribed regions of the world, govern these, and themselves likewise have an incomplete form of essence and power. They are even in some manner akin and inseparable from those that are governed by them.

The gods, however, even those that go upon bodies as their vehicles, are separated and diverse from these in all respects. Hence the supervising of the bodies brings no specific lessening of rank to those to whom the body is subject; it is encompassed by the superior essence, and is turned back to it, and is no obstacle to it. But on the other hand, the close affiliation to the generative nature and the imperfection ensuing by it, give the demons necessarily an inferior destiny. In short, the divine race is predominant and takes precedence in the general arrangement among existing things; but the demonian order is ministrant, receiving whatever directions the gods may give, and responding promptly by own effort, in regard to whatever the gods contemplate, will and

command.

Hence the gods are freed from the forces which incline downward to the realm of generated existence, but the demons are not wholly purified from these.

So much, therefore, we have subjoined in regard to this solution of the problem, and we think that from the former and the present arguments the matter will become better known.

CLASSIFICATION REJECTED

For the reasons which we have before stated, the classification of passive and impassive which thou makest, should be rejected as not being suitable for any of the superior races, on account of the causes which we formerly mentioned. Indeed it deserves to be overturned, because it argues from the Sacred Dramas that “they are impression able.” What Holy Rite, and what act of worship performed according to the Sacerdotal Regulations, is accomplished through a passive condition, or effects any satisfying of passive conditions? Was it not ordained from the beginning, according to the ordinances ³⁸ of the gods and likewise intelligently? The Rite both copies the order of the gods, both that of the gods of the world of Mind and that of the gods in the sky, and contains the eternal metres of things that are, and wonderful spectacles which were sent down from the Creator (Demiurgus) and Father of All, by which also the things of Silence are represented by arcane symbols, the things without form are held firmly in forms, the things which are superior to any likeness are represented unshapen, and everything is accomplished by a sole Divine Cause, which is so far remote from passive conditions that no reasoning faculty can reach to it.

This fact, therefore, I suppose, becomes the cause why many turn away to the multitude of projects. For men who are unable to acquire the deeper knowledge of the reasonings themselves, yet who imagine themselves able, are entirely carried away by their own peculiar human emotions, and form their judgment of matters relating to the gods from things incident to themselves. Hence they err in two ways: because they fail of the true concept of divine things; and because when they miss these, they drag their notions of these down to the level of human emotions themselves. ³⁹ Nevertheless, it ought not to be supposed that the things which are performed alike to gods and human beings, – such as acts of homage, salutations, offerings, first-fruits, are to be regarded as after the same plan of action in both cases; but that each is established apart from the other with regard to the distinction of being more honorable – the one venerated as being for the gods and the other held in low esteem as relating to human concerns. Thus is given a completeness to passive conditions, both of those doing homage and those to whom it is rendered, for they are human and of a corporeal nature; but honor is to be bestowed unstintingly upon the operation of the others, as being performed through unchanging admiration and a reverent condition of mind, because they are rendered to the gods.

Notes:

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings¹. Symbols constituted a prominent feature in

the ancient religious worship. They were undoubtedly to a large extent fetishes, there being a measure of the essence and operation of the deity supposed to exist in them. The Egyptian, and indeed the whole Oriental worship consisted of them, and even at the present time, there is no ritual that is without them. But then, human language is made up of symbols and representative sounds.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings². This is distinctly denied in Part V, Chapter VI.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings³. See Part V, Chapters II and IV.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings⁴. The custom here described was universal in ancient times, and it is still found in parts of India. Its remains also exist in architecture and ornamentation. In the worship of the Ashera and Venus of Eryx, and of the Great Mother in Syria and Western Asia, the observances were carried to greater extremes. King Asa of Judea is said to have deposed his mother, Maacha, from royal dignity for her participation – “because she made a phallos to an Ashera,” I Kings XV: XIII. It has been generally believed that the Festivals and Initiatory, or Perfective Rites, of the different countries, included the same feature, as indeed, is here admitted. It should be borne in mind, however, before any hasty judgment, that the different faiths had their two sides, like the right or the left, and that worshippers regarded them and took part in them according to their inherent disposition. Thus, in India, there are the Asceticsiva-worshippers, and the Saktas, to this day. In this way the Mysteries presented themes for the highest veneration, as well as phases that are esteemed as gross and lascivious. Every curious person, therefore, sees in them what he has eyes to see, and is often blind to the rest.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings⁵. Greek, kalwn from kalon, good, beauty, moral virtue, excellence. Mr. M. W. Hazeltine, in the New York Sun, remarks upon this apparent confounding of moral with physical beauty, which this word exhibits, that “the ancients had not that conception which forms the basis and aim of Æsthetics in our time. To a Greek, if a thing was beautiful it was good, and if it was good it was beautiful; that, at least, was the prevailing attitude of the Hellenic mind.”

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings⁶. These opinions were anciently entertained, the universe itself being regarded not as a fabric but as a birth, a creation or genesis, and evolution. But the philosophers generally disapproved of the doleful rites and immodest speech. Plutarch enumerates the various practices, such as the eating of raw flesh, the days of fasting and mourning for the slain divinity, (Matthew XI, 16; Amos VIII, 10) and the uttering of filthy and unseemly language. He explains that they were “not in honor of the gods, but rather to avert, mollify and appease the wrath of evil demons.” The Emperor Julian, however, forbade the using of words that should not be spoken or heard.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings⁷. “This doctrine is so rational,” says Mr. Thomas Taylor, “that it can never be objected to by any but quacks in philosophy and religion. For as he is nothing more than a quack in medicine who endeavors to remove

a latent bodily disease before he has called it forth externally, and by this means diminished its fury, so he is nothing more than a pretender in philosophy, who attempts to remove the passions by violent repression, instead of moderate compliance and gentle persuasion.”

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings⁸. By the genesis or generation, Plutarch explains Plato to mean “only that substance or underlying principle which is subject to change and motion, placed between the forming cause and the thing formed, transmitting hither those shapes and figures which have been contrived and modelled” in the eternal world. Hence it means more than mere procreating, it is no less than transition from eternity where the soul is native, into the region of time and space, where it is only a sojourner.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings⁹. The Library of Alexandria bore the inscription of “Remedies for the Soul.” A similar term is said to have been placed over the collection of Papyri in the “House of Seti” at Thebes, in Egypt.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings¹⁰. Plato describes this chorus in the Phaidros. “Divine beauty was then splendid to the view,” says he, “when we, in company with Zeus, and others with other gods, beheld together with the Blessed Chorus, the divine Spectacle and were initiated into the Perfective Rites, which are rightly called most happy. Being ourselves entire and unaffected by the evils which await us in the Aftertime, we took part in the Orgiac Drama, and having become both Mystics and Beholders (mystæ and epoptæ) we beheld in the pure light, apparitions that were complete, unique, calm, and felicitous – being ourselves pure from earthly contamination and not encompassed in this investiture which we now call 'Body' and by which we are carried about, fastened like an oyster to his shell.”

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings¹¹. Sokrates in his last discourse remarks that “While we live we shall approach nearest to the superior knowledge if we hold no partnership with the body, except what absolute necessity requires, and do not permit ourselves to be tainted by its nature, but keep ourselves uncontaminated by it till God himself shall release us.” This is what a later poet has portrayed as living above while in the world.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings¹². The dramas or performances of the Mystic or Theurgic Rites and their ulterior significance are here denoted – the experiences of the Soul and its return to the Eternal World, as it enters into the conditions of worldly existence. The Egyptian “Book of the Dead” treats of the same matters.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings¹³. The histrionic scenes and ceremonies which were exhibited to the Beholders of the Rites.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings¹⁴. The Chaldaean Oracles reiterate this sentiment.

“The soul of articulate-speaking men will in some way bring God into itself.
“holding fellowship with nothing mortal, it is all intoxicated with God.”

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings¹⁵. This is explained by the hierophant in Moore's romance, *The Epicurean*. The aim of the initiation and "blessed spectacle" is thus set forth; "to retrieve the ruin of the blessed soul, to clear away from around her the clouds of earth, and, restoring her lost wings, facilitate her return to Heaven – such is the great task of our religion, and such the triumph of those Divine Mysteries, in whose inmost depths the life and essence of our holy religion is treasured."

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings¹⁶. The names of the gods in the ancient Skythic and Euphratean languages were believed to possess some inherent virtue as well as charm. Hence the Oracle gives the injunction:
"Never change the barbarous names;
For among them are terms God-given,
That have ineffable virtue in Sacred Rites."

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings¹⁷. Epistle of Peter II, 1, 4, "That by these ye might be partakers or communicants of the divine nature."

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings¹⁸. Plato: *Theætetos*. "It is necessary that there should be always something opposed to God; and it cannot be seated among the gods, but of necessity hovers around this mortal nature and this region of earth."

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings¹⁹. It was held that the vital emanation from the blood of the sacrificed animals was invigorating to spiritual beings (*Odyssey*, Book XI). But Plutarch is severe about it. He affirms that the murderous and lascivious customs at the festivals only served "to avert and appease the malice of certain evil spirits, or to satisfy the violent and raging lusts of some that either could not, or would not, enjoy with their bodies or by their bodies." Such, he declared, bring plagues and famine into towns, raise wars and dissensions, till such time as they obtain and enjoy that which they love.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings²⁰. Proklos affirms that the Divine Necessity was always coincident with the Divine Will and Purpose. Plato explains it as a habitude of the Efficient Cause or Author of Existence and Matter. Thus, also, there is a necessity in the thoughts and actions of human beings, yet the soul is self-moving, and so is its own "Cause."

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings²¹. Thales, Pythagoras, Plato, and the Stoics generally held that the demons were beings of a psychic, rather than of an actual divine nature. Plutarch ascribed to them only a limited term of existence.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings²². It may be observed in this treatise that the divine personalities are very commonly indicated by terms in the neuter gender. The same is true in other instances. Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson was once in conversation with the Rev. Cyrus Bartol, the Transcendentalist clergyman of Boston. The latter mentioned the Supreme Being, using the masculine pronoun. "Why not say 'It,' " Mr. Emerson asked?

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings²³. Whatever we keep most closely in thought, whether with favor or aversion, we gradually become like in character. Paul wrote like a philosopher to the Corinthian disciples. After referring to Moses with a vail, he adds "We all with face unveiled, looking on the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are transformed from glory to glory into the same image from his spirit."

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings²⁴. In the Theurgic discipline of neophytes, there were several stages to be surmounted before arriving at the degree denominated "Perfection" or purity. We may trace them in the chapter, as follows: 1. The coming to the divinity who is supplicated. 2. The assimilation into the likeness of the divinity, and 3. Perfection. In the first of these degrees the candidate was styled Most Excellent; in the second, Divine; and in the third, Theopator; as now being fully identified with Deity itself.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings²⁵. Origen affirmed that the angels have bodies, and that God alone is a spiritual essence, without body. Hence the clause in the Confession, "without body, parts, or passions."

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings²⁶. Plato has explained this very similarity in the *Timeus*. "When each of the stars necessary for the constitution of Time had obtained a motion adapted to its condition, and their bodies bound or encompassed by living chains, had become beings possessing life, and had learned their prescribed duty, they pursued their course."

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings²⁷. That the Supreme Being is One and Absolute is the leading principle of every ancient faith, however bizarre and polytheistic it may be esteemed. Amon, the tutelar god of Thebes in Egypt who may have been in the mind of Abammon when writing was denominated: "The One, the Maker of all that have being." The Mysteries of Ser-Apis (Serapis) were favored by Iamblichos, and the Rites of Mithras by Porphyry.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings²⁸. Plato makes use of an expression signifying "not subject to decay or disease;" Aristotle, "not being increased or changed."

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings²⁹. These are the astral globes which these divinities, being themselves in reality spiritual essences, were supposed to encompass and permeate.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings³⁰. In this sentence the feminine and masculine relation, as typifying the procedure of the divine operation, is very distinctly set forth. The phusis and genesis actually signify as much. In this treatise, as in other philosophic works, genesis signifies the descending of the creative energy from the sempersistent world into the sphere and condition of created existence, and phusis, or nature, is the female or productive agency, by which the transition is accomplished. The sentence admits accordingly to be also rendered as follows: "Others go forth from them into the womb of the world (Kosmos), even the world itself, and likewise descend in due order through the whole generative process, continuing, without hindrance, as far as the

incomplete races.”

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings³¹. Abammon follows the Egyptian category and adopts the Grecian names for divinities supposed to be nearest in character and quality. In this description, Kronos or Saturn represents the centripetal and Aries or Mars the centrifugal force.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings³². It would be easy to imagine this as happening in the case of the hundred and more asteroids, that exist in the space between the orbits of the planets Mars and Jupiter, or of the comets that so often come rushing through space.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings³³. See Chapter VIII.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings³⁴. Damaskios remarks that “the Divine Intelligence which encompasses all things after the manner of models, brings them forth from itself as likenesses.”

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings³⁵. That is, all are brought back to their source and rooted in their cause.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings³⁶. In other words, this atman, or self, is at once all-receptive and all-procreative, as having the joint powers of procreation and production.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings³⁷. We are thus brought to the central principle of the ancient philosophy and worship; that the many divinities are in essence the One Sole Deity, and comprised in the Paternal Cause of the Universe. The Orphic Carmen in the same way inculcated that all the gods and both the sexes are included in the same Zeus. They are attributes, or qualities, of the One, personalities rather than individuals.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings³⁸. The older laws of the Athenians were called thesmá as being ordained by the gods, or rather the priests. The laws of Drako were thesmoi, those of Solon nomoi or regulations.

Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings³⁹. Damaskios remarks, that “we discourse after the manner of men respecting principles that are extolled as divine.”

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Part II

Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

DEMONS AND HALF-GODS DIVERSE IN ESSENCE

This it now becomes necessary to describe to thee: "in what a demon differs from a hero or half-god and a soul, whether in essence, in power, or in energy."

I say accordingly, that demons are produced by the generative and creative powers of the gods, in the furthest extreme of emanation and the last divisions: but that the heroes or half-gods have their origin by the forces of life in the gods; and that the superior and highest in rank of the souls are brought to completeness and distinguished from these forces.

The nature of the demons and half-gods being thus derived from different sources, their essence is of necessity different. Thus that of the demons is effective of purposes, bringing to maturity the natures about the world, and exercising guardianship individually over those coming into existence. ¹ That of the heroes is life-sustaining, promotive of the reasoning faculty, and directive of souls.

The powers likewise may be defined accordingly. Those of the demons pertain to coming into existence and also to the oversight of the souls and of the connection of the souls with the bodies. It is also proper to assign to the heroes powers life-imparting, directive of human beings, and setting free from the nativity.

THE ENERGIES

It follows now that their energies should be explained. Those of the demons may be described as being employed around the world and as extending generally among the things accomplished by themselves; but those of the heroes not only as not extending so far, but as being engaged with the distribution of the souls. So, therefore these being explained, the Soul is next, and ranks as the end of the series of divine beings. Having received from these two races a specific allotment of powers, it both augments the apportionment by other more abundant additions from itself, and likewise projects from itself at one time various forms and principles of life which are entirely different, and at another time still others. Thus making use of different lives and ideals according to each region of the world, it is united with those that it likes, and draws away from those from which it may wish to be separate, becoming assimilated to all, and separated from them by otherness. In this way, choosing principles akin both to the things that are semipersistent and to those that come into existence in time, it allies itself to the gods by harmonies of essence and power other than those by which the demons and half-gods

are likewise entwined with them. Though possessing in a less degree than they the everlasting condition of similar life and energy, nevertheless, through the good will of the gods and the luminance imparted by their light, it often goes higher and is exalted to a higher rank, even to that of angels. It, then, remains no longer in the limitations of the psychal condition, but is developed completely through its whole substance into an angelic soul and an uncontaminated life. Hence, manifestly, the Soul seems to contain in itself manifold essences, different rational qualities, and all manner of idealities. If, however, we must speak the honest truth, the contingency exists, that it is always limited in reference to one particular thing; yet being in communication with the Causes it is at different times allied to different ones.

So great, therefore, being the differences among them in all these respects, it is no longer worth while to dispute in regard to the particular thing which is the cause of difference among them. Whatsoever nature they every one have, by that they are to be distinguished from the others. So far also, as they form one common society, to such an extent their common quality may be contemplated; for in this way it will be possible to comprehend without mistake, and to define distinctly the view to be entertained of the whole subject.

EPIPHANIES OR "APPARITIONS"

Let us now proceed to the Epiphanies or apparitions (which are seen at the Initiations). What is the difference in them? For thou puttest the question: "What is the token (at the Sacred Rites) of the presence of a god, an angel or an archangel, or a demon, or of some archon, or a soul?" ²

I will, therefore, in a single statement lay down the proposition that the apparitions are in accord with their essences, powers and energies. For such as they are as such do they manifest themselves to those who are making the invocations; and they not only exhibit energies and forms which are characteristic of themselves, but they likewise display their own particular tokens. In order, however, to draw the distinctions minutely, this is the explanation: The spectral forms of the gods are uniform; those of the demons are diversified; those of the angels are more simple in appearance than those belonging to the demons, but inferior to those of the gods; those of the archangels approach nearer to the divine Causes; those of the archons – if those that have charge of the sublunary elements seem to thee to be the lords of the world ³ – will be diversified but arranged in proper order; but if they are princes of the region of Matter, they will not only be more diversified but much more imperfect than the others; and those of the souls will appear in every kind of style.

In the (Epoptic) Vision the figures of the gods shine brilliantly; ⁴ those of the archangels are awe-inspiring and yet gentle; those of the angels are milder; those of the demons are alarming. Those of the half-gods, although these are left out in your question, yet there should be an answer for the sake of the truth because they are more gentle than those of the demons. Those of the archons are terrifying to the Beholders, ⁵ if they are the archons of the universe; and hurtful and distressing, if they are of the realm of Matter. The figures of the souls are similar to those of the half-gods except that they are inferior to them.

Moreover, the figures of the gods in regard to size, aspect, external appearance and everything around them, are absolutely unchangeable. Those of the archangels are very near to those of the gods in these respects, but come short of being actually the same. Those of the angels are inferior to these, but are unchangeable. Those of the demons are seen in different shapes and appear great and small at different times; but the manifestations are the same. Those of the archons who are rulers are unchangeable, but the apparitions of those that belong to the realm of Matter are apt to change into innumerable forms. Those of the half-gods are like those of the demons, and those of the souls conform in no small degree to changeableness, peculiar to the demons.

Further still, to the gods there pertain order and tranquillity; and with the figures of the archangels there exists a dramatic representation of order and quietude. With the angels there is present the disposition for order and peacefulness, but they are not free from motion. The figures of the demons are accompanied by tumult and disorder. With those of the archons there are objects to be seen analogous to each class which we have already mentioned: those of the realm of Matter being borne along tumultuously. Those of the half-gods are constantly in motion and are never exempt from change, and those of the Souls resemble the figures of half-gods, but at the same time are inferior to them.

With these peculiarities there flashes out from the gods Beauty which seems inconceivable, holding the Beholders fixed with wonder, imparting to them an unutterable gladness, displaying itself to view with ineffable symmetry, and carrying off the palm from other forms of comeliness. The glorious views of the archangels have themselves very great beauty, but it is by no means ineffable and admirable as that of the gods. Those of the angels partake in a degree of the beauty which they receive from the archangels.

The spirits at the Autopsia, the demons and half-gods, ⁶ both of them possess beauty in defined forms; but that of the demons is set forth in ways that make their essence distinct, and that of the half-gods displays a manlike character. The figures of the archons are classified by the twofold distinction. For those of the one class display a beauty predominant and self-originated; and those of the other class exhibit an ingenious mock-representation of a beautiful shape. The figures of the souls are themselves arranged in definite forms, but these are more diverse than is the case with the half-gods, being more particularly circumscribed and controlled by a single ideal.

If, however, it is necessary in regard to them all that they shall be defined by a common rule, I say that as every one of them all is constituted, and as it has its own peculiar nature, even so do they all participate of the Absolute Beauty according to the existing allotment.

MANIFESTATIONS AT THE RITES

Proceeding therefore to other peculiarities of the superior races, we will remark that in the Sacred Performances there is with the gods an incredible celerity, and although they

themselves are immutable and steadfast, they shine out swifter than mind itself. But with the archangels the swift movements are commingled in some way with the dramatic performances. Those of the angels, however, are connected with a certain moving impulse and take part no further in a similar manner in the Perfective Rite ⁷ by way of speaking.

With the demons there is a show of rapidness in the Performances which is more than genuine. But with the figures of the half-gods, there appears a certain grandness in the motions; nevertheless it is not possible to effect these things, which they desire at the Perfective Rite as quickly as it is for the demons. In the case of those of the archons, those of the former class possessing authority, exhibit performances that appear highly creditable; and those of the second class have more display, but fall short in regard to results at the end. The figures of the souls are seen to be incessantly in motion, but feebler than in the case of those of the half-gods.

In addition to these points, the magnitude of the apparitions may be considered. In the case of the gods it is displayed to such a degree as sometimes to hide from view the entire sky, the sun and the moon, and likewise to make it no longer possible for the earth to stand firm while they are making their descent. ⁸

When archangels appear, there are certain regions of the world set in motion, and a divided luminance goes in advance before them. But they themselves according to the magnitude of their dominion display also light in correspondence with its dimension. The angelic luminosity is very much less, and is likewise greatly divided. In the case of the demons themselves, it is still more diffused than with the angels, and their magnitude is observed to be not always equal. The manifestation of the half-gods is less than this, but it exhibits more of pride of condition. The figures of the archons that are rulers of pericomic forms appear large and indeed of huge dimensions, but those that are distributed over the realm of Matter employ more ostentation and false pretending. Those of the souls do not all seem equal, and they appear smaller than the figures of the half-gods. In short, it is according to the magnitude of the powers in each of the Superior races, according to the vastness of the dominion through which they are extended and in which they exercise authority, and according to the due proportion itself, that the magnitude of the manifestations is graciously exhibited in every one of them.

After these explanations let us define the characteristics of these images thus individually manifest. In the autoptic visions of the gods, the most brilliant spectacles of reality itself are to be beheld. They not only shine steadily but they are plainly visible as if in organic shapes. The images of the archangels present themselves to view genuine and perfect. Those of the angels preserve the form itself, but they come short in the completeness of distinctive tokens. Those of the demons are scarcely perceptible, and those of the half-gods are still inferior. Those of the cosmic archons are clear, and those of the archons of the realm of Matter are indistinct, but both classes seem to be exercising authority. Those of the souls appear like mere shadows.

In like manner, let us explain also, in regard to the luminosity. The images of the gods

glow with abundance of light, and those of the archangels are surpassingly luminous. ⁹ Those of the angels are resplendent with light, but the demons present the appearance of smouldering fire, and the half-gods a commingling from many sources. The cosmic archons are relatively more pure from such admixture, but those of the realm of Matter exhibit a mingling of dissimilar and incongruous elements. The Souls are more distinctly visible from many admixtures in the sphere of generated existence, the light being supplied only by partial gleams.

In the same manner we will speak further of the things which have been discussed. The Fire of the gods shines brilliantly an undivided flame without sound, and it fills all the depths of the world like a conflagration, but not after the manner of a worldly occurrence. ¹⁰ The fire of the archangel is unbroken, but there is to be seen around it a great mass going before it or following after it. The fire of the angels is disjoined, yet it appears in very perfect forms. That of the demons is not only circumscribed into still briefer dimensions, and may be explained in a word, but it is not worthy to be noticed by those who are contemplating spectacle of the superior beings. That of the half-gods contain after a manner the same peculiarities, but at the same time it falls short of an exact similarity to that of the demons. That of the archons of the higher class is observed to be more glowing; but in the case of those belonging to the realm of Matter, it is darker. That of the Souls themselves exhibits many divisions and various forms mingled together from many of the natures around the world.

To repeat: The fire of the gods is always stable to the view. That of the archangels is mild; that of the angels is in constant motion; that of the demons is unstable; that of the heroes is for the most part in swift motion; that of the archons of the first class is mild, but that of those of the lower order is full of fluctuation. That of the souls changes with innumerable motions.

THE SUPERIOR RACES AND MATTER

Nevertheless, that which operates to purify the souls (from impurity incident in the realm of generated existence) is complete in the gods, but is simply of an exalting character in the archangels. The angels only loosen the bonds which fasten them to the sphere of matter. Demons draw them into the realm of nature, ¹¹ and the half-gods bring them down into the province of the operations of the senses. The archons either entrust them with the charge of things pertaining to the cosmic world, or with the dominion of those belonging to the realm of matter, as the case may be. Souls, when they appear to the Beholders, attract in some manner downward to the sphere of generated existence.

And, further, this fact is to be kept in view: that everything of the visible likeness that is pure and stable thou shouldst attribute to the Superior Races. Whatever of them is very brilliant and firmly fixed in itself, ascribe to the gods. Whatever is luminous and nevertheless exists as by something else than itself, impute to the archangels; and whatever remains in a different form assign to the angels. Whatever is borne along as by a breeze and is not stably fixed, but is permeated by alien natures, all which is conformable to the inferior orders, is to be credited to some foreign source.

This classification, however, may also be made according to the difference of the commingling. For with the demons emanations from the planetary worlds are mingled and are borne along unsteadily by the motion of the astral world. With the half-gods, groups of spirits belonging to the department of generated life are again mixed up around which they are also themselves constantly in motion. The cosmic archons likewise remain exhibiting the cosmic character which they possess; but those archons that belong to the realm of matter are filled with exhalations of the material region. Souls are infected with extraordinary defilements and alien spirits. With these accompaniments each of these races exhibits itself at the epiphanies.

To thee it will be no unimportant evidence that on these occasions there is in the case of the gods a consuming of matter all at once as by lightning. With the archangels it is destroyed in a short time. In the case of the angels there is a loosening and leading away from it. With the demons there is an arranging of it in an orderly manner. With the half-gods it is to be observed that they become adapted to it in due measures and give careful attention to it ingeniously. The archons that rule the planetary worlds are placed with it as though they were superior, and so shine forth as from themselves; but those of the realm of matter exhibit themselves as entirely filled up from matter. As for the souls, those also, that are pure manifest themselves outside of matter, but those of the opposite character are encompassed by it.

BENEFITS DERIVED FROM INITIATION

Moreover, the benefits acquired from the manifestations, are neither all alike, nor do they have the same fruits. ¹² The advent of the god imparts to us health of body, virtue of soul, purity of mind, and indeed, to speak to the point, the leading of everything in us upward to its own first principles. It not only takes away the cold and destructive quality in us, but it augments the vital warmth and makes it more potent and predominant. It likewise brings everything into accord with the soul and mind. The light not only shines in the mental constitution, but it also exhibits that which is not body as body; to the eyes of the soul through those of the body.

The coming of the archangels likewise brings the same benefits, but it does not give them at all times, nor to all persons, nor such as are sufficient, or complete, or that may not be taken away; nor does the light shine in a manner equal to what is beheld at the manifestations of the gods. The presence of the angels dispenses benefits as if making a distribution of them, and the energy through which it is manifested comes far short of including in itself a perfect light. That of the demons weighs down the body and chastens it with diseases, drags down the Soul into the realm of nature, and also fails to remove from bodies the sensibility born with bodies, detains in this region those who were hastening toward the fire, and does not set free from the bonds of Fate. The appearing of the half-gods is similar in various respects to that of the demons, but it differs in this respect, that it arouses the individual to noble and important deeds. The display of the cosmic archons at the autopsia imparts advantages of a general character and everything pertaining to the business of life; and that of the archons of the realm of matter extends benefits incident to the sphere of matter, and such works as pertain to the earth. Still further, moreover, the Vision of the Souls that are uncontaminate and established in the order of angels is elevating in its influence and salutary to the soul. It

likewise imparts a sacred hope and bestows those benefits to which a sacred hope aspires. But the Vision of Souls of a different quality produces a tendency downward into the sphere of generated existence, corrupts the fruits of hope, and fills the Beholders with Perturbations that nail them fast to corporeal conditions.

Notes:

Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations¹. Plato, Republic, X, Ch. 15. "This is the beginning of another period for men of mortal race. The demon will not receive you as having been allotted to him, but you will choose the demon; the cause is in him who makes the choice."

Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations². Scutellius enumerates nine classes of spiritual beings, namely: 1. Invisible Gods; 2. Visible Gods of the Sky; 3. Archangels; 4. Angels; 5. Demons; 6. Leaders; 7. Princes; 8. Heroes or Demi-gods; 9. Souls. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians enumerates the following: 1. Princes; 2. Authorities; 3. Kosmokrators or princes of the Cosmos; 4. Spiritual essences in the super-celestial spheres. Damaskios enumerates six orders in the Chaldaean Categories as follows: 1. God that are purely mind; 2. The Gods subsisting before all subordinate dominion; 3. Rulers; 4. Archangels; 5. Divinities that are confined to no specific place or service; 6. Divinities or geniuses with specific duties.

Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations³. These, the Kosmokrators, are supposed by Thomas Taylor to be the rulers of the planets. The Assyrians and Chaldaeans enumerated nine distinct orders – three Triads of three classes each. The Archangels correspond to the seven Amshaspands of the Zoroastrian category; and the archons of the sphere of Matter appear to have been often regarded as evil potencies. The ancients, however, did not always distinguish good and evil quite as the moderns with their ethical standards.

Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations⁴. Proklos following Iamblichos gives this description: "In all the Perfective Rites and Mysteries, the gods project many shapes of themselves, and display many changing figures; there will be a formless luminance radiating from them; then again it will be represented in a human form, and again it will go into some different shape." Some of the figures were empousæ and not gods, and excited alarm; others were attractive, and others encouraged.

Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations⁵. The "Beholders," epopæ or seers, were the individuals engaged in being initiated, or "perfected." We have preserved this term uniformly to avoid confusing readers.

Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations⁶. The Greek term "autoptic spirits," meaning those which appear at the "Autopsia," or Perfective Rite. Mr. Robert Brown, Jr., ably describes it. The candidates, or Beholders, having passed the preliminary discipline as Mystæ, are ushered into the Sekos, or chamber of Initiation. "Here, deeply excited and agitated by all they have gone through, ready to believe anything and everything, in that state of abstinence, which is, or is supposed to be, most

favorable to the reception of supernatural displays, with their minds more or less affected by drugs and their whole being permeated with the impression and expectation of a revelation of the more than mortal, they were allowed to see. This is the Autopsia, or Personal inspection, the Crown of Mysteries, the Etopteia, or Divine Beholding, which was used as a synonym to express the highest earthly happiness, and he who enjoyed it became an Epoptes, or Contemplator, beyond which this world could afford him nothing." - Great Dionysiak Myth, VI, ii, 3. Compare also Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, XII, 2-4.

Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations⁷. Greek, Tó apotelestikon, the perfective rite. The Romans termed the ceremonies "Initiations," as signifying the beginning of a new life, while the Greeks regarded it as denoting a completing of the Herculean labors of the Soul. The services were conducted after the form of a dramatic representation, and Clement styled them accordingly, "the Drama of the Mysteries." The ancient Theatre took its rise from these rites, as the Modern Theatre had its origin in the Mystery-Plays of the Monks in the Middle Ages. The Athenian Theatre was a Temple of Bacchus.

Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations⁸. The Chaldaean Oracles describe these scenic displays in very similar terms:

"If thou invoked me often, thou wouldst behold what thou desirest:
For then the concave vault of heaven does not appear,
The stars shine not, the moonlight wastes away,
The earth no more stands still;
All things are to be seen by the flashes of the lightnings."

Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations⁹. The Chaldaean Oracles disapprove of invoking those manifestations "Thou shalt not invoke the Autoptic Image of Being, for it is not proper for thee to see these things before the body is perfected, or initiated."

Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations¹⁰. The divine essence was anciently described in every religion as fire, and so the "eternal fire" was preserved in temples and on altars, as its symbol. Hence, the Chaldaean Oracle commands: "When thou shalt behold the Very Holy Fire without form, shining in flashes down into the depths of the world, then listen to the Voice of the Fire." Zoroaster at the Altar and Moses on Mount Sinai (Deuteronomy IV, 4) are described as hearing the Voice of the Supreme Being from such a source.

Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations¹¹. Minutius Felix remarks that "the demons bear downward by heavy weight, and turn from God to material conditions." The Chaldaean Oracle also says: "When bewitching (magnetizing) souls they always draw them away from the Sacred Rites." Much that is considered spiritual, and even divine influence, is of this character.

Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations¹². The Chaldaean Oracles have this declaration: "From those descending from the Empyrean regions the soul

obtains the soul-nourishing flower.”

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Chapter 6. The Order Exhibited at the Rites
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Besides, there takes place at the Autopsies an exhibition of the order which those that are beheld, carefully maintain, namely:

That of the gods, having gods or angels around them.

That of the archangels, having angels either that precede them, keep in line with them, or follow after; or else being accompanied by another company of angels acting as an escort.

That of the angels exhibiting the peculiar operations of the order to which they have attained.

That of the good demons presenting for contemplation their own works and the benefits which they bestow.

That of the avenging demons displaying the forms of vengeance.

That of other evil demons encompassed by hurtful, bloodsucking and fierce wild beasts.

That of the archons (of the cosmos) exhibiting along with themselves certain regions of the universe.

That of the other class of archons attracting the disorder and discord of the realm of matter.

That of a soul that is entire and not held fast in a specific form; it is beheld around the whole cosmic region as a formless fire, indicative of the Soul of the World, entire, one, undivided and without form.

That of the purified soul; the glowing shape is seen, the fire pure and without mixture. Then are seen its innermost luminance, and the form pure and steady; and it follows after the upward leading guide rejoicing with hearty good will and itself by its operations showing its proper rank.

The soul, however, that bows, carries along with it the symbols of bonds and punishments, and is not only weighed down by groups of spirits belonging to the realm of matter, but it is also held fast by the anomalous disorders incident to that realm, and there are also seen demons of the generative order placing their authority directly

before it.

In short all these races make their respective orders duly distinguishable, and they show at once the regions which have fallen to them, and the allotments in which they abide. Those that are of the air display aerial fire; the earthly ones a chthonian and darker light, and the celestials a more splendid luminance. All these races are distributed in these three regions (the earth, air, and superior heaven) in the threefold order of beginning, intermediary and last; those of the gods displaying the highest and purest causes pertaining to this threefold order; those of the angels being reckoned from the archangels; those of the demons being manifest as attendant upon these and those of the half-gods in like manner ministrant – not indeed after the same services as the demons, but after other and different ways of their own. Those of the archons have the allotment which is set apart to them; to one class the superintendence of the cosmic world and to the other that of the realm of matter. Those of the souls are classed as the last of the superior races.

Hence they all indicate their places by themselves; the first classes having the first; the second class the second, and the third class the third, and the others are arranged as belonging to some of these.

OTHER PHENOMENA AT THE RITES

Meanwhile, the gods beam forth light to such a degree of thinness that the bodily eyes are not able to sustain it, but are affected in the same way that fishes are when they are drawn from a muddy and thick fluid into rare and transparent air. For the men, the Beholders of the Divine Fire not being able to breathe because of the thinness of the fire, become enfeebled as they come to the sight, and are excluded from natural respiration. Archangels also give forth a luminant atmosphere which is not endurable for breathing; yet they neither shine with the same pure light, nor are they as overpowering as the gods their superiors. The presence of the angels makes the temperature of the air endurable, so that it is possible for the theurgic priests to approach them. In the case of the demons there is nothing to affect the air, and in consequence the atmosphere around them does not become more tenuous; a luminosity does not precede them, in which their form might become visible from being taken and fixed by the air, and there occurs no radiation around them. In the case of the half-gods, certain parts of the earth are moved as by an earthquake, and noises echo around; but the air does not become at all thinner, or unsuitable for the theurgic priests, so as to render it impossible for them to endure it. In regard to the archons, whether those of the cosmic worlds or those that belong to the realm of matter, an assemblage of many luminous apparitions, hard to endure, surrounds them; but there occurs no attenuation of the air, such as is incident to the supramundane region, or to the Zodiacal signs on high. ² But with the manifestations of the souls the air is evidently affiliated more closely, and being united to them receives in itself their limitations.

ACQUIREMENTS FROM THE SUPERIOR RACES

Accordingly, at the last stage, when the gods appear, the dispositions of soul of those who are invoking them, realize a thorough removing of passive conditions and the transcendent perfection, and not only the energy superior in every respect, but they also

participate in divine love and a tranquillity of mind, almost beyond estimation. When the archangels are beheld, these dispositions acquire a pure constancy of condition, spiritual insight and stable power. At the coming of the angels into view, they receive an allotment of wisdom and truth, and likewise of pure excellence, sure knowledge and order in harmony with these bestowments. But when the demons are contemplated the tendencies take on eager desire incident to the sphere of generated nature, and likewise not only acquire zeal for the completing of the Performances according to allotment of such exercises. If there is a view of the half-gods, then they are not only borne away by other such impressions, but also share in many anxieties of a character relating to a communion of souls. But when the archons are brought within purview, then movements are set up in the soul, cosmic or such as pertain to the realm of matter, as the case may be. And with the visions of the souls, there are brought into activity the generative appetites and natural solicitude as regards the care of the bodies and such other matters as relate to these.

In connection with these things, the apparition of the gods imparts sincerity and power, and likewise success in undertakings, and also gifts the greatest benefits; and at the appearing of the others everything is bestowed abundantly as it may be consistent with the rank of the several orders. For example that of the archangels, gives the perception of what is true, not simply in regard to all things collectively but definitely in relation to specific matters, and this not at all times but occasionally – not indefinitely to all or everywhere, but singly in a particular manner or to some special purposes. In short it does not confer power in like manner neither upon all, nor at all times, nor everywhere, but only sometimes and in some particular way. At the appearing of the angels, there are still narrower limitations than these in the circuit in the bestowing of benefits. The coming of the demons into view does not impart gifts good to the soul but either those of the body or which relate to the body. These they dispense wherever the order of the universe permits. According to the same conditions, the presence of the half-gods imparts benefits of the second and third order, aiming to acquire supervision of the entire polity of souls, but those of the earth and those of the cosmic realm. At the manifestation of the archons, the cosmic and the other class, the former confer blessings of a cosmic nature and those of this life; but those of the inferior rank bring out not a few advantages incident to the realm of matter, they exhibit to the Beholders things which contribute to the welfare of human life.

Thus we have set forth particularly the boons received from these superior races according to the respective order of every one, and have likewise made a complete answer to what thou hast asked in regard to matters of importance in relation to their appearings to view. So much, then, let us set forth respecting these subjects.

BOASTFUL SPEECH AND DECEPTIVE IMAGES

The matter, however, which thou hast brought to us for a decisive solution respecting these superior races, whether as thy own opinion or whether as what thou hast heard from others, is neither correct nor rightly expressed. Thou sayest: "It is a common thing for the gods and demons alike, and with all the Superior races, to speak boastfully, and to project an unreal image into view."

Such is not the fact as thou supposest. For a god, an angel, and a good demon (when they appear at the Rites) give instruction freely to human beings, in regard to their own essence, but never in addition, make use in their teachings, of any expression greater than their transcendent power or inherent good qualities. For truth is essentially coexistent with the gods as light is coexistent with the Sun. At the same time we affirm that a God is in no want of excellence or any virtue which can be added to him through words. Besides the angels and demons always receive truth beforehand from the gods; ³ hence they never say anything else than this. Being every one of them perfect in their essence, it is not possible to add anything more to it by praising.

When, therefore, does the untruthful act of “speaking boastfully” mentioned by thee, take place? When there occurs some errancy in the theurgic technique, and the images which ought to be at the Autopsia are not, but others of a different kind are encountered, then the inferior races assume the guise of the more venerable orders, and pretend to be the very ones which they are counterfeiting; ⁴ and in such cases they abandon themselves to boastful speeches and pretensions of power which they do not possess. For I think that if anything spurious grows out like an excrescence from the first beginning, there will a great mass of falsehood flow forth from the perversion. It is necessary, therefore, for the priests to learn this thoroughly from the entire arrangement among the apparitions, and being on their guard against this, they can detect and reject the misleading assumptions of these pretenders as not being spirits that are good and true.

It is not proper in the faithful judging of things to bring forward conspicuously the errors. In the case of other sciences or arts we do not pass judgment from the failures that may have occurred in them. Things, therefore, which through inexpertness in evocation are hardly ever performed quite successfully in ten thousand representations thou shouldst not characterize from the untoward incidents, but shouldst instead bring to notice something different in respect to them. For though the performances at the self-revealing display ⁵ are such failures as thou sayest, boastful and false, those of the true adepts around the Fire are both genuine and true. For as in regard to everything else, the ruling powers begin first by themselves and furnish to themselves that which they bestow to others – as for example, in essence, in life, in action – so also supplying the truth abundantly to all beings, they are true first of all in respect to themselves and at the very outset show their own essence to the Beholders. hence, likewise, they exhibit the Autoptic fire to the theurgic priests. For it is not the operation of heat to freeze, nor of light to make dark or to hide anything from view, nor in anything else the function of which is to accomplish a particular thing, is there the power to perform some contrary operation at the same time. But on the other hand those that are not of that nature and are contrary to them in essence are able to receive these contrary impulses, or are naturally disposed to fall into evil.

We say the same things now in regard to phantasms, or apparitions. ⁶ For if these are not themselves genuine, but others of the kind are so, that really exist, they certainly will not be among the self-revealing spirits, but are of the kind that display themselves ostentatiously as genuine. These participate in deception and falsehood after the manner of the forms that appear in mirrors; and they thus attract the

understanding to no good purpose, in regard to matters which never will be true of the superior races but will be among fraudulent deceptions. For the counterfeit of that which really is, and that also which resembles it faintly, as well as that which has become a source of deception, are characteristic of the races that are genuine and distinct to the view. On the other hand the gods and those that come after the gods reveal true likenesses of themselves, but never project apparitions such as are formed in water or in mirrors. Why should they exhibit these phantasms? Would it be to bring evidence of their own essence and power?

On the contrary these things are not at all necessary. They become a source of error and deception to those who believe, and they draw away the Beholders from the genuine knowledge of the gods. What useful thing do they bestow on those who are contemplating these things in the epoptic vision? What profit can be derived from that which is false? Yet unless divinity has this nature will it project a phantasm from itself? How possibly can a race that is stable and firmly established in itself and that is the source of essence and that which is genuine, create in an alien seat, a deceptive counterfeit from itself? By no means, certainly, does a god either transform himself into phantasms or project them from himself into other things, but he causes to shine forth from himself true intuitions in the true moral nature of the souls. According to these facts, they also who accompany the gods are zealous in regard to the genuineness of the gods that appear at the Autopsias.

Next, however, thou affirmest that it is “a common thing for the gods and demons and other races to make likenesses and speak boastfully of themselves.” Such a mode of speaking confounds all the races of superior beings with each other, and leaves no difference between one and another. For in this view of the matter all qualities will be common with them and nothing that is choice will be conceded to the exalted ones. It is more just, therefore, to ask by way of denial: “in what way, then, will the race of gods be superior to that of the demons?” But the fact is, that these races have no common plane: it is not imaginable, and it is not proper to argue from the last and lowest races and from the false steps among the last races, in regard to the first orders and the genuine impressions seen of them. Any one thus thinking in regard to these matters will come close to what is right, and will become acceptable to the gods.

BECOMING AT ONE WITH DEITY

Thou also affirmest that “ignorance and delusion in respect to the gods is irreligiousness and impiety,” and submittest the true doctrine in relation to these things. In all this there is no conflict of sentiment, but it is confessed by all alike. For who will not agree that the superior knowledge which is possessed of real being is most closely affiliated to the gods, but that the condition of not knowing falls infinitely far away from the divine causes of true ideals, sinking down to non-being? As, however, there has not enough been said upon this matter, I will add what is wanting; and because thy statement is made in a philosophic and logical manner rather than according to the working technique of the priests, I think it necessary to say something of a more theurgic character in regard to these matters.

Be it so that “not-knowing and delusion are discord and impiety.” It does not follow on

this account that the offerings and invocations which are made particularly to the gods, and also the Divine Performances are thereby made fallacies. For it is not the concept that unites the theurgic priests to the gods: else what is there to hinder those who pursue philosophic speculation contemplatively, from having the theurgic union to the gods? Now, however, in actual truth, this is not the case. On the other hand, it is the complete fulfilling of the arcane performances, the carrying of them through in a manner worthy of the gods and surpassing all conception, and likewise the power of the voiceless symbols which are perceived by the gods alone, that establish the Theurgic Union. Hence we do not effect these things by thinking. ⁷

For thus the spiritual energy will be of these things, and imparted from ourselves; neither of which suppositions is true. For even when we are not revolving these things in mind the sacred emblems themselves are accomplishing their own work, and the ineffable power of the gods to whom these emblems belong, recognizes of itself its own likenesses. This, however, is not from having been aroused by our intelligence; for it is not in the nature of things that those that encompass should be set in motion by those that are encompassed, nor things that are perfect by those that are imperfect, nor wholes by parts. Hence, the divine causes are not called forth beforehand into operation by our acts of thinking; nevertheless it is necessary to acknowledge these and also all the best conditions of the soul, and the purity pertaining to us as certain joint causes before existing. Yet the things which arouse the divine will as by authority are the divine countersigns themselves. Thus the activities of the gods are set in motion by themselves and do not receive into themselves from an inferior source any principle of their characteristic energy.

I have prolonged this discussion to this extent in order that thou mayst not be led to think that all command of the operation in the Theurgic Rites is from us, and that thou mayst not suppose that the genuineness of these performances is actually regulated by conditions in our acts of thinking, or that they are made false by deception. For although we may know the peculiarities which are incident to each race of the superior beings, we may fail to hit upon the truth in regard to their operations. Yet without this knowledge the mystic union never takes place; nevertheless the union and the knowledge are by no means the same thing. So, the divine purity is in no sense by means of the right knowledge, as that of the body is not through health; but on the other hand it is more completely one and more pure than knowledge. Nothing, therefore, of such qualities in us, or anything whatever that is human, helps in ally way to the accomplishment of the divine exercises.

Accept this accordingly which indeed is said in addition but is a sufficient reply to thy whole conception in regard to technique of Theurgy. But those statements of thine have the same force with these in which thou acknowledgest that “the superior knowledge in respect to the gods is holy and helpful,” and callest the not-knowing in respect to things revered and beautiful “Darkness,” but the knowing of them, “Light” – adding that “the former condition will cause human beings to be beset with every form of evil through ignorance and restlessness, and the other will be the source of everything beneficial.” For all these things tend in the same direction with those which have been mentioned, and obtain a fitting notice with them. It is necessary, therefore, to pass them by. and to

proceed with the inquiries respecting the Oracular Art, in order to resolve them.

Notes:

Chapter 6. The Order Exhibited at the Rites¹. “Sometimes,” says Potter, “terrible apparitions astonished the trembling spectators” at the Perfective Rites. This was the case everywhere. In the Chaldaean Oracles mention is made of these direful creatures. They are called “dogs of the earth.” “Thy vessel (the body) the chthonian beasts shall make their home.” This implies obsession and evil influences from the spiritual world.

Chapter 6. The Order Exhibited at the Rites². The Supreme elements, *ákra stoixeía*, are the signs of the Zodiac, which constituted an important feature in theurgy as allied to astrology.

Chapter 6. The Order Exhibited at the Rites³. Damaskios also declares that “a general distribution takes place from the One Origin of all things, and Plato calls this, the Truth.”

Chapter 6. The Order Exhibited at the Rites⁴. Emanuel Swedenborg, in his *Memoirs and Spiritual Diary*, describes spirits of this character.

Chapter 6. The Order Exhibited at the Rites⁵. Greek, *antofanaus deixews*. Perhaps this refers to the fact also that fit the final vision witnessed at the Perfective Rite, or Autopsia, the Beholder was revealed to himself in the impression which it gave him. Certainly Plato and Alkibiades regarded it with different sentiments.

Chapter 6. The Order Exhibited at the Rites⁶. Professor Taylor Lewis defines *phantasma* as signifying an apparition. Chrysippos, the philosopher, gives the following meanings: *phantasia*, imagination which leads to contemplation of the Cause or origin; *phantaston*, something to impress the imagination; *phantastikon*, a fancy or vain impulse from the mind proceeding from nothing truly imaginable; *phantasma*, a phantom to which we are drawn by fanciful attraction. Liddell and Scott would define a *phantasia* as an opinion presented from sensation; *phantaston*, as something leading to such opinion; *phantastikon*, as the faculty of such presentation; and *phantasma*, as an image presented to the mind by an object.

Chapter 6. The Order Exhibited at the Rites⁷. Here Abammon makes a new departure in the New Platonic philosophy. Plotinus and Porphyry had taught a system of doctrine analogous to the later Persian scheme, with the Absolute One at the summit from whom proceeded by emanation, the Over-Mind, the Universal Soul, and Nature. To this Absolute, there might, by philosophic discipline, contemplation and ecstasy, be attained for brief periods, the enosis or intimate union. Iamblichos, however, seems to discard this doctrine with its theory of impassiveness, and to make theurgic or sacerdotal virtues the condition of excellence by which the divine part of the Soul exalts itself even above the Over-Mind, and becomes at one with the Absolute. Hence he inculcated the utility of religious rites and initiations as explained in the reply of Abammon. He was followed in this path by Eunapios, Syrianos, and by Proklos, the great light of the later philosophy.

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Part III

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First, then, thou askest that it shall be explained to thee in detail what it is that takes place in the prognosticating of the future. It is impossible to set forth at once what thou art trying to learn. For according to the gist of the question, thou imaginest something like this of the art of prognosticating: as that it is generated, and some thing existing in the realm of nature. But it is not one of the things that are generated, nor what a certain natural mutation accomplishes, nor some ingenious product which has been invented for useful purposes in every-day life – nor, in short, is it a human accomplishment at all, but divine, and beyond the realm of nature; and having been sent down from the heaven above, unbegotten and eternal, it naturally takes the first place.

The chief remedy for all doubts of such a kind is this: to know the origin of the Divining Art, that it is neither set in motion from bodies nor from the conditions incident to bodies, nor from a peculiar nature and the faculties incident to the nature, nor from human preparation or experience pertaining to it; but on the other hand, not from any skill acquired externally in relation to some part of which may be attempted in every-day life. Its entire validity pertains to the gods, and is conferred by the gods. It is perfected by the divine Performances and symbols, and there are likewise divine spectacles and learned theorems. All other things are subject as instrumentalities for the gift of foreknowledge which has been transmitted from the gods. These include both such as relate to our soul and body and such as are inherent in the nature of everything or in the individual natures of every one. Some things, however, are subordinate beforehand, as being in the realm of Matter; such, for example, as places, or other things of a like character.

If, however, any one thinking that he is saying something erudite, shall refuse to consider the primary causes, ¹ but shall attribute the art and faculty of divining to operations of an inferior character, such as to the activities of bodies, or changes of conditions, or to different movements or operations of human life, or to reasons of a psychic or physical nature; or if he shall argue from the correspondence of these things to others as being causes, presuming that he is setting forth what is true, he has gone entirely wrong. ² On the contrary, the one right goal, and the one principle in relation to all these matters, will be found to be: that in no case do we derive the divination of the future from any of those things that have no foreknowledge in themselves, but that we shall contemplate the mantic power which is apportioned

over all the world and to all the natures distributed therein from the gods who possess in themselves the entire compass of the knowledge of the things that have a being. For such a cause is not only primal, and, in the fullest sense, universal, but it also contains in itself primarily whatever it imparts to those that participate of it; and it especially bestows the true knowledge which the divining art requires. It likewise comprehends beforehand the essence and cause of the things about to take place, from which, of necessity, the attaining of foreknowledge comes unceasingly.

Let such, therefore, be the principle generally, not only in relation to all divining from which it is practicable to find out by the mode of the superior knowing all the forms of it, but let us also now take it in turn, following out the questions which thou hast proposed.

DIVINATION BY DREAMS.

In regard to divining in sleep thou remarkest as follows: "When we are asleep we often come, through dreams, to a perception of things that are about to occur. We are not in an ecstasy, full of commotion, for the body lies at rest; yet we do not ourselves apprehend these things as clearly as when we are awake." ³

These things of which thou speakest are likely to take place in human dreams and in those set in motion by the soul or by our own thoughts, or by discourse, or such things as arise from phantasies or daily cares. These are sometimes true and sometimes false; they sometimes hit upon actual fact, but they go, many times, wide of the mark.

The dreams, however, which are termed "God-sent," do not have their origin in the way which thou describest. On the contrary, either when sleep is leaving us and we are beginning to awake, it happens that we hear a brief expression in regard to things to be done; or it may be that the voices are heard during the period between being awake and asleep, or when we have become entirely awake. Sometimes, also, an invisible and unbodied spirit encompasses the recumbent persons in a circle, so as not to come to the sight of the individual, but to be present in another joint sensation and understanding. It makes a rustling sound when thus coming in, and also diffuses itself in every direction, without producing any sense of contact; and it likewise accomplishes wonderful results in setting free from ill conditions of the soul and also of the body. At other times, however, a light beaming forth bright and soft, the sight of the eyes is not only held fast, but it remains so even when they had been wide open before. But the other senses continue awake, and are jointly conscious to a certain degree as to how the gods are visible in the light. Hence the individuals both hear what they say, and, following with the thought, know what they do. Of course, this is perceived more perfectly when the eyes are looking attentively, and the mind, being in full vigor, understands the things which are performed, and the movement of the Beholders is likewise in harmony. ⁴ These, therefore, being so many and so different, are in nothing like human dreams. On the contrary, not only are the peculiar wakeful condition, the holding of the sight, the seizure resembling torpor (catalepsy), the condition between sleep and awake, and the recent awaking or entire wakefulness, all of them divine, and accordant with the receiving of the gods, but they are actually sent from the gods themselves, and a part of the divine manifestations precedes them, after

the manner of such things.

Banish, then, from the divine dreams in which particularly there is divination, all notion that “we are asleep” in any sense whatever, and also the statement that “we do not clearly apprehend the meaning,” as applying to those who behold the divine apparitions. For not only is the presence of the gods manifest in a degree by no means inferior to those who understand such things, but if we must tell the truth, it is necessarily more exact and distinct, and effects a more perfect consciousness in the former case than in the latter. Some, however, who do not take cognizance of these proofs of dreams which are truly oracular, but who think that they are in some way common with those that are merely human, fall rarely, and by accident, upon those in which there is a foreknowing of the future. Hence they doubt whether there are any dreams that contain truth in any degree. Indeed, this, it seems to me, disquiets thee because of not knowing their genuine tokens. But it is necessary that thou shouldst prefer the true meaning of dreams before thy own notions, and follow out the whole argument in regard to divination during sleep.

DIVINATION AND HEALING POWER.

They (the ancient sages to whom we have referred) likewise affirm the following things:

The soul, having a twofold life – the one along with the body, and the other separate from everything corporeal – we, in the case of the other mode of living, when we are awake, make use of many things pertaining to the life belonging with the body, except we, after a manner, detach ourselves from it in every respect by pure principles of thought and understanding. In sleep, however, we are completely set free as from fetters lying by us, and bring into activity the life which is separate from the sphere of generated existence. Hence, therefore, this form or ideal of life, whether it is spiritual ⁵ or divine, which is the same, or only one existing individually by itself, is awakened in us and puts forth its energy according to its own nature.

DISTINCT PROVINCES OF THE MIND AND SOUL.

Since, therefore, the mind contemplates the things that have real being, but the soul encompasses in itself the principles of all things that exist in the sphere of generated existence, it follows, of course, that, answering to the cause which comprehends future events, it prognosticates them, as arranged by their antecedent principles. Besides, however, when it joins together the divided sections of life and spiritual energy in the wholes (divine essences) from which they were taken, it creates a more perfect art of divining than this. For it is then filled from the wholes with every kind of knowledge, and thus most frequently attains to true conception in regard to the events which are taking place in the world. Nevertheless, when it is united to the gods through such liberated energy, it receives on the instant abundances of perceptions absolutely genuine, from which it gives forth the true oracular solution of divine dreams, and thenceforth establishes the absolutely genuine principles of knowledge. If, on the other hand, the soul interblends its spiritual and divine nature with the superior beings, its mental images will then be more pure and unalloyed, whether in respect to the gods or in

relation to beings essentially incorporeal; or, to speak in simple terms, in respect to whatsoever contributes to the truth, that which relates to the world of mind. If, however, it exalts the notions of things pertaining to the world of creation to the gods, their causes, it receives from them, in addition, a power and a capacity of knowing which reasons intelligently both of things that were and things that will be. ⁶ It not only takes a view of every period of time, and examines events that are to take place in the period, but it likewise participates in the arranging, management and correcting of them. It not only heals diseased bodies, ⁷ but also restores to order many things among men which were discordant and disorderly. It also gives forth discoveries of arts, proper regulations for the administering of law, and institutions of customs. Thus, in the temples of Asklepios, not only are diseases brought to an end by dreams of divine origin, but through manifestations by night the medical art is combined with the sacred visions. ⁸

The entire army of Alexander was saved when in imminent danger of being destroyed in the night, Dionysos (Bacchus) appearing in a dream and indicating the way to be delivered from desperate calamities. ⁹ Aphutis, likewise, when it was besieged by King Lysander, was saved through dreams sent from Amun; he withdrawing his troops at the shortest notice and raising the siege without delay. ¹⁰

Yet why is it necessary to refer specifically to events which occur daily, and exhibit an energy superior to speech? These things, therefore, which have been set forth in relation to divination from the gods during sleep, both as to what it is and the benefit which it affords to human beings, are certainly enough.

TOKENS OF GENUINE POSSESSION.

And then thou affirmest as follows: "In like manner, many also come to a perception of the future through enthusiastic rapture and a divine impulse, when at the same time so thoroughly awake as to have the senses in full activity. Nevertheless, they by no means follow the matter closely, or at least they do not attend to it as closely as when in their ordinary condition."

Right here I wish to show the tokens in these occurrences of those who are really possessed by the gods. For they have either placed their whole life at the disposal as a vehicle or organ for the inspiring gods, or they exchange the human for the divine life, or else they carry on their own life in reference to the divinity. They are not acting by sense, nor are they watchful as those whose senses are aroused to greater acuteness, nor do they attempt the study of the future, nor are they moved as those who are active from impulse. On the other hand, they do not understand themselves, either as they were formerly or in any other way; nor, in short, do they exercise their own intelligence for themselves, nor do they put forth any superior knowledge of their own.

The chief token may be adduced as follows: Many, through the divine affiatus, are not burned when brought to the fire, nor when the fire touches them. Many, also, who are burned, do not perceive it, because in this case they are not living the life of an animal.

Some, also, who are pierced with spits do not feel it; and others who have been struck on the shoulders with axes, and others still whose arms are cut with knives, ¹¹ do not mind ¹² it at all. Indeed, their performances. are not at all usual with human beings. For to those who are divinely possessed inaccessible places become accessible: they are thrown into the fire; they go through fire they pass through rivers like the holy maids in Kastabalis. ¹³ From these examples it is shown that they who are enthusiasts do not have any thought of themselves, and that they do not live a human or an animal life so far as relates to sense or natural impulse, but that they exchange it for another more divine life by which they are inspired and by which they are held fast.

OTHER TOKENS -- THE BODY LIFTED INTO THE AIR.

There are truly many forms of divine possession, and the divine inbreathing is set in motion in many ways. Hence, accordingly, there are many different signs of it. For on the one hand the gods by whom we are inspired are different, and communicate a different inspiration; and on the other hand, the mode of the divine transports being changed, it occasions another form of divine impulse. For either the divinity possesses us, or we our entire selves become the god's own, or we are active in common with him. Sometimes we share the ultimate or last power of the divinity, at another time the intermediate, and sometimes the first. At one time there is a bare participation of these raptures; at another there is also communion; and sometimes, again, there is a complete union. Either the soul alone enjoys, or it has it with the body, or else the whole living individual shares it in common.

From these diversities it follows that the distinctive signs denoting those who are inspired are of many kinds. Not only among them are the motions of the body and of specific parts, but likewise its perfect repose, and also harmonious orders and dances and musical voices, or the contraries of these. The body also is seen lifted up, or increased in size, or borne along raised up in the air, ¹⁴ or there appear occurrences in relation to it the contrary of these. There is likewise to be observed an evenness of voice according to extent, or with many deviations with intervals of silence and irregularities. Again, sometimes, the sounds are augmented or relaxed after the rules of music, and sometimes after another manner.

DESCENT OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT AND FIRE.

The principal thing in the evoking of a spirit is that the spirit is seen coming down and entering into an individual, also its importance and kind, and he is mystically persuaded and governed by it. The form of fire is seen by the recipient before the receiving of the spirit, and sometimes, either when the god is descending or when he is withdrawing himself, it becomes visible to all the Beholders. ¹⁵ From this manifestation the sign of the god which is the most genuine, the most potent, and most perfectly ordered, becomes known to a certainty; and it is not only proper to proclaim what is true in respect to certain matters but also to exhibit the power or to complete the rite with the adepts. But they who, without witnessing these holy spectacles at the Sacred Rites, effect the conjuring of the spirits in some invisible manner, grope their way as in the

dark, and know nothing of what they are doing, except some very small signs which are manifested through the body of the person who is divinely inspired and some other things which are plainly to be seen; and they are likewise ignorant of everything of divine inbreathing which is veiled in invisibility.

But to come back from this digression. If the presence of the fire of the gods and an ineffable form of light from without shall permeate the individual who is under control, fill him completely, have absolute dominion over him, and encompass him on all sides so that he can put forth no energy of his own, what sense or mental effort or purpose of his own can he have who receives the divine fire? Or what impulse merely human can then insinuate itself, or what human reception of passion or ecstasy or turning aside of imagination, or anything else of the kind, such as the many conceive of, may then take place?

Let such as these, then be the divine tokens of genuine inspiration from the gods, which any one, keeping in mind, will not swerve from the right knowledge in regard to it.

ENTHUSIASM OR DIVINE INSPIRATION.

Nevertheless, it is not enough to learn these things alone, nor may any one who knows only these things become perfect in divine overknowledge. On the other hand, it is necessary to know also what enthusiasm or divine possession really is and how it is developed. The conjecture that it is a carrying away of the understanding by a demonian afflatus is utterly false. ¹⁶ The human understanding, if it is truly thus possessed, is not carried away. Not from daemons, but from gods. comes inspiration. Really, on the other hand, it is not simply an ecstatic rapture or trance, but, on the contrary, an exaltation and passing to the superior condition; whereas mental distraction and ecstasy indicate a general overturning to the worse. Hence, a person declaring this may speak of the results in respect to the entheast individuals and yet give no instruction in regard to the principal matter. This, however, consists in holding fast to all these manifestations of divinity to which the ecstatic condition afterward succeeds. No one, therefore, may justly suppose that the entheast condition is of the soul and of faculties belonging to it, or of the mind or of the energies or of bodily infirmity, or that without this latter concomitant it may not thus occur and be, as a matter of course, the underlying cause. For the matter of divine possession and inspiration is in no sense a human attainment, nor has it an origin in human organs and energies. On the contrary, these are subordinate, and the Divinity employs them as instruments. Neither the soul nor the body of the individual has the least agency in the matter, but he exercises the whole function of divination through himself; and being free, with no intermingling of anything extraneous; he works according to his own nature.

Hence, the vaticinations being thus performed as I describe, they are, of a certainty, incapable of being untruthful. But when the Soul begins beforehand or is disturbed in the meantime or takes part with the body, and interrupts the divine harmony, the divinations become tumultuous and false, and the inspiration is no longer true or genuine.

ORIGIN OF THE ENTHEASTIC RAPTURE.

Suppose, accordingly, that the genuine art of divining was a liberating of the divine from the other soul ¹⁷ or a separating of the mind by itself or an extending of its purview, or that it was a vehemence and extending of energy or passion or a sharpening and prompting of the understanding or an in-spiriting of the mind. All such things being conditions which are set in motion by our own soul, it may be assumed with good reason that enthusiasm or inspiration has the same origin. But if the body is to be regarded as the cause of the inspired rapture or trance, on account of certain temperaments, either melancholic or some other, or, to speak more particularly, on account of heat and cold and moisture, or some form of these or, in a word, the mingling or tempering of them or the breath, or more or less of these, in such case the bodily condition would be the cause of the aberration, and it would arise from the physical disturbances. ¹⁸ If, however, the origin arises from both these, from the body and the soul so far as these are blended together with each other, such activity will be common to them as a single living being. But on the contrary, it is neither an affair of the body nor of the soul nor of the two together. For there is not in these any cause of divine aberration, and it is not in the order of nature for superior things to be generated from those that are inferior. ¹⁹

On the other hand, it is necessary to investigate the causes of the divine frenzy. ²⁰ These are illuminations that come down from the gods, the inspirations that are imparted from them, and the absolute authority from them, which not only encompasses all things in us but banishes entirely away the notions and activities which are peculiarly our own. The frenzy causes words to be let fall that are not uttered with the understanding of those who speak them; but it is declared, on the contrary, that they are sounded with a frenzied mouth, the speakers being all of them subservient and entirely controlled by the energy of the dominant intelligence. All enthusiasm is of such a character, and is brought to perfection from causes of such a kind; hence it is by impression, and not with precise accurateness, that we speak in relation to it.

THE MUSIC AT THE ARCANES RITES.

In addition to these things you remark as follows: "So also certain others of these ecstasies become entheist or inspired when they hear cymbals, drums, or some choral chant, ²¹ as, for example, those who are engaged in the Korybantic Rites, ²² those who are possessed at the Sabazian festival and those who are celebrating the Rites of the Divine Mother." ²³

It is proper, accordingly, to tell the causes of these things, how they came into existence, and what explanation there is for the performing of the Rites.

These allusions which you make, namely, that the music at these festivals is exciting and passionate; that the sound of the flutes causes or heals conditions of aberration; that the music changes the temperaments or dispositions of the body; that by some of the choral songs the Bacchic frenzy is excited, but by others the Bacchic orgies are made to cease; how the peculiar differences of these accord with the various

dispositions of the soul, and also that the peculiar wavering and variable choric chants, such as those of Olympus, and others of the same kind., are adapted to the producing of ecstasies ²⁴ – all of them seem to me to be stated in a manner unfavorable to the entheast condition; for they are both physical and human in their quality and performances, according to our technic, but nothing essentially divine appears in them.

We affirm, accordingly, not only that the shoutings and choric songs are sacred to the gods, each and all of them, as being peculiarly their own, but likewise that there is a kindred relationship between them in their proper order, according to their respective ranks and powers, the motions in the universe itself and the harmonious sounds emitted from the motions. By the agency of such a relationship of the choric songs to the gods it is that their presence actually becomes manifest, for there is nothing intervening; and hence whatever has a mere incidental resemblance to them becomes immediately participant of them. There also takes place at once a perfect possession and filling with the divine essence and power. Nor is this because the body and soul are in each other, and affected alike in sympathy with the songs; but, on the contrary, it is because the inspiration of the gods is not separated from the divine harmony, and being allied with it, as being of the same kindred, it is shared by it in just measures. It is, however, aroused or checked, one or the other, according to the specific rank of the gods. But this is never by any means to be termed a separating, purifying, or a remedy. For, first of all, it is not dispensed on account of any disease or excess or plethora in us, but the whole beginning and course of operation are from the gods above.

On the contrary, it is not proper to say that the soul originally consisted of harmony and rhythm, for in that case the entheast condition is an inherent property of the soul alone. It will be better, therefore, to bring our discourse back to this statement: that the soul, prior to the giving of itself to the body, was a hearer of the divine harmony, and accordingly, when it came into a body it heard such songs as especially preserve throughout the divine trace of harmony, it followed them eagerly, recalled from them the remembrance of divine harmony, is borne along with it, becomes closely allied to it, and partakes of it as much as possible.

Hence we may generally explain in this way the source of the divine faculty of divination.

INSPIRATION AND ORGIASTIC EXCITEMENT.

Let us now proceed with our reasoning in relation to this subject of divination. We may not affirm this at the outset, namely, that Nature is leading everything to its own, for to be entheast is in no way a work of Nature; nor may we say that the composition and quality of the air and of the environment create a different condition in the bodies of those that are entheast, for the divine products of inspiration are never modified by bodily powers or components; nor may we suppose that the divine inspiration gives sanction to special conditions and incidents, for the gift of the gods to human beings is the bestowing of their own energy, and is superior to everything of the sphere of generated existence. But since the power of the Korghantian divinities is, in a certain

degree, of a guardian and perfecting character, ²⁵ and the peculiar usages of the Sabazian worship make ready for the Bacchic enthusiasm, the purifying of souls, and deliverances from old incriminations, their respective inspirations are, accordingly, different in every important particular. ²⁶

Thou seemest to think that those who are enrapt by the Mother of the gods are males, for thou callest them, accordingly, “Metrizontes”; yet that is not true, for the “Metrizontesæ” are chiefly women. A very few, however, are males, and such as may be more delicate. This enthusiasm has a power that is both life-engendering and perfective, in which respect it differs from every other form of frenzy.

Proceeding thus, after this way, into what remains of the present discussion, and distinguishing particularly the inspirations of the Nymphs or of Pan, and their other specific differences with reference to the powers of the gods, we shall treat of them separately according to their respective peculiarities; and shall, likewise, explain why they sally forth and spend time in the mountains, why some of them appear bound, and why they are to be worshipped by offerings. We shall like-wise attribute these things to the sources of divine authority, as they possess all power in themselves; but we shall neither affirm that an accumulation of refuse of the body or soul requires to be cleansed away, nor that the periods of the seasons are the cause of such ill conditions, nor that the receiving of what is similar and the taking away of the contrary will prove a remedy for an excess of this kind. For all such things are set down in the category of the corporeal, and are entirely separate from a divine and spiritual life. Each, however, succeeds in accomplishing the operations which pertain to its own nature. Hence the spirits that are aroused by the gods, and that excite human beings to the Bacchic frenzy, overstep every other human and natural activity, and it is not right to compare their operations to those taking place in ordinary ways; but in respect to those which are utterly strange, and of earliest origin, it is proper to refer them back to the gods as authors. One form of divine inspiration is, accordingly, of this kind, and takes place after this manner.

THE ORACLES.

Another mode of entheastic divining, that of Oracles, is famous, and very plain in many ways, concerning which thou declarest such things as these, namely: “Others are inspired when drinking water, like the priest of the Klarian Apollo at Kolophon; others when sitting over cavities in the earth, like the women who deliver the oracles at Delphi; others when overpowered by vapors from the water, like the prophetesses at Branchidæ.”

Thou hast mentioned these three oracles by name, not be-cause there are only these, for there are many more which thou hast passed over in silence; but since these take rank before the others, and on account of which are more sought, thou art sufficiently instructed in respect to the mode of divining. I will now, because thou hast enough of these things, speak of the oracular art which has been sent down to human beings from the gods. We will, therefore, make our discourse in relation to these three, and not let a word fall respecting the many other oracles.

It is acknowledged by everybody that the oracle at Kolophon gives its responses through the medium of water. There is a spring in a house underground, and from this the prophet drinks. On certain appointed nights, many sacred ceremonies having taken place beforehand, he drinks, and delivers oracles, but he is not seen by the beholders who are present. It is manifest from this, therefore, that that water possesses an oracular quality; but how this is so not every man, as the saying is, may know. For it seems as though a mantic spirit extended through it; but this is not true. For the divine being does not go about among its participants, thus divided and apportioned; but, on the contrary, it shines upon the fountain as though giving of itself from without, and fills it with the mantic power from itself. The inspiration which the water imparts is by no means all of it from the god, but it causes an adaptedness alone and a purification of the light-like spirit ²⁷ in us, through which we become able to contain the divinity; but the presence of the god is different from this, and prior to it, and it flashes in from above like the lightning. Indeed, this presence forsakes no one of those who, through kindred nature, are in intimate union to it; but it is immediately present, and employs the prophet as an instrument, he neither being normally himself, nor aware of what he is saying or where on the earth he is. Hence, after giving the oracles, he recovers control of himself at a later moment with difficulty. Indeed, before drinking the water he fasts an entire day and night, and as he begins to become entheist he withdraws by himself into certain sacred retreats. Thus, by this withdrawing and separating from human affairs, he makes himself pure, and prepared for the receiving of the divinity; and through this means he has the inspiration of the divinity illuminating the pure sanctuary of his own soul, and he likewise effects by himself, unobstructed, the possession and divine presence complete and without impediment.

The prophetess at Delphi, however, whether she gives oracles to human beings from a tenuous and fire-like spirit brought up from somewhere through an aperture, ²⁸ or vaticinates sitting in the inner shrine, upon the bronze chair with three feet or upon the four-footed chair sacred to the divinities, ²⁹ gives herself up entirely to the divine spirit and is shined upon by the ray of the fire. In fact, when the fiery mist coming up from the aperture, dense and abundant, encompasses her on every side in a circle, she becomes filled by it with a divine luminance, and when she sits down in the seat of the god she comes into harmony with the unwavering oracular power of the divinity, and from these two preparatory operations she becomes entirely the medium of the god. Then truly is the god present, shining upon her separately, being himself other than the fire, the spirit, their peculiar seats and all the visible apparatus about the place, physical, and sacred.

The woman also who delivers the oracles in verse at Branchidal, whether she is holding the staff ³⁰ which was first presented by a divinity and becomes filled with the divine luminance, or whether she sits upon a wheel and predicts what is to occur, or whether she dips her feet or the border of her robe in the water, or receives the god by inhaling vapor from the water, she becomes by all these ways prepared for the reception, and partakes of him from without. ³¹

These things, therefore, are plain to view, namely: the abundance of offerings, the

established law of the whole sacred Observance, and such other things as are performed in a manner worthy of a god, prior to the oracular responding, such as the baths of the prophetess, her fasting for three entire days, her abiding in the interior shrine and having there already the light and enjoying it a long time. For these things all make it manifest that there is an invoking of the deity, and that he becomes present as though coming from outside; and not only that the prophetess, before she takes her position in the accustomed place, receives an inspiration of a wonderful character, but likewise in the very spirit that is brought up from the fountain shows forth another divinity more ancient comes to view, separate from the place, who is the cause or the author of the place, of the fountain, and of the whole technic of divining. ³²

Notes:

1. The Causes are to be understood to be divine beings. Plato and the Stoic philosophers regarded the art or faculty of divination as incited by a divine rapture or enthusiasm, and an imparting of divine knowledge to human beings. They also believed that there were divine dreams. Xenophanes, however, was a disbeliever, and Pythagoras rejected all forms of divination by sacrifices. Strato taught that the noëtic faculties are active in sleep. Plutarch explains that when the imaginative part of the soul and the divine efflux are in accord, there is a mantic inspiration. The body, he insists, is sometimes naturally endued with the faculty of divining; and in other cases, this faculty may be set in operation by external and artificial means.

Abammon, as will be noted, denies that the sex of the seer or ecstatic is an essential in the technique of divination. The oracle at Delphi was served by virgin attendants, and the shrines in other places by persons of some particular age, and in a peculiar state of alienation produced by fasting, mesmeric applications, anesthesia or other artificial means.

2. Aristotle imputed the divining faculty to a melancholic temperament; others to an inhaling of certain vapors or gases, and others to a variety of causes. Abammon in subsequent chapters treats of these. Plato describes priests skilled in divining as “the interpreters of the divinity to men.”

3. We are reminded of Campbell's verse:

“Coming events cast their shadows before.” The person whose faculties are acute thus perceives them. Plutarch defines the matter as follows: “The divining faculty when it has drawn itself farthest from the present, touches on that which is to come; and it withdraws itself from this by a certain disposition of body, by which that state is produced which we call Inspiration or Enthusiasm.”

4. This is similar in many respects to the vision of the prophet Balaam (Numbers, XXIV, 15, 16) “Balaam the son of Beor saith – the man beholding what is good and true, saith: Hearing the oracular utterances of God, apprehending superior knowledge from the Most High – Beholding the vision of God in sleep, having his eyes unsealed.”

5. Greek, *noeros*, the pure reason; spiritual; from *noos*, or Mind. It is the term usually rendered so in this treatise.

6. Nothing resembles death more than sleep," says Xenophon. "In sleep the soul reveals her divine quality, and being then set free from the body she beholds the future."

7. Physicians and others having the care of the sick have been indebted to dreams for the discovery of many remedies. Such is the testimony of Cicero, Diodoros, Plutarch and others. Intuitive suggestion also prompts to the employing of the proper remedial measures.

8. Asklepios (or Asklepios or Æsculapius), the patron god of the medical art, was called Oneiopompos or sender of dreams. There were sleep-houses at his various temples, in which "incubation" or mesmerism was employed. The dreams which were thus procured were interpreted by the prophets or mantic priests, and the remedies suggested if found valuable became a part of the pharmacopoeia. The names of Cheiron, Jason, Medeia, seem to refer to this practice. Aristeides, in the reign of the Antonines, gives a very full account of this matter.

9. Plutarch and Arrian state that when Alexander on his return from India passed through Gedrosia, his army suffered from famine and disease; The mortality was prodigious and it required all the energy of the king to bring forward the survivors out of the trackless desert. We have no account of the interposition of the divinity, but, after arriving in Karamania, an orgy or festival of seven days was celebrated in his honor.

10. Aphutis or Aphytis was a city of the peninsula of Pallene or Phlegra on the gulf of Saloniki. Pausanias and Plutarch tell the story that Lysander, the King of Sparta, was warned by a dream to abandon his purpose of investing the city and a temple to the god Amun was built and dedicated.

11. This is probably an allusion to the mutilations practiced at Rites like the orgies of the Great Mother. Similar suspensions of sensibility are reported in cases of burning alive and the tortures inflicted upon religious devotees. The enthusiasm or mental ecstasy overcomes the corporeal sensation.

12. Greek, *parakolonthéw* to follow a subject. It implies an understanding, together with a fixing of the attention till external consciousness is lost sight of.

13. Kastabalis was a city in Kappadokia. In it was a temple of Artemis or Anahita, whose priestesses or holy maids, it was affirmed, walked with bare feet upon the snow and upon burning coals without harm.

14. M. Eugene Salverte in his work on the "Philosophy of Magic" remarks that in spite of their master's assertions to the contrary, "the enthusiastic disciples of Iamblichos affirmed that when he prayed he was raised to the height of ten cubits from the ground; and dupes to the same metaphor, although Christians, have had the simplicity to attribute a similar miracle to St. Clare and St. Francis of Assisi."

Calmet mentions "several instances of persons full of religion and piety, who, in the fervor of their visions, have been taken up into the air and remained there some time." He adds that he personally knew a man to whom this occurred. Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, it is said; "was raised up from the ground to the height of two feet, while his body shone like light." Savonarola, who was burned at the stake, one person declares, was seen to remain suspended at a considerable height from the floor of his dungeon. Superintendent Moeller of Freiburg testified that Anna Maria Fleischer was "raised in bed, with her whole body, head and feet to the height of nine ells and a half, so that it

appeared as if she would have flown through the windows.”

If the polarity of the body can be changed by the will, this would be a physical possibility.

15. This description presents a striking analogy to that given by John the Baptist in the Gospels, “He shall baptize or envelop you in a holy spirit and fire.” (The words, “and fire,” are interpolated.) “I have beheld the holy spirit descending as a dove from the sky, and it remained upon him.”

16. Theophrastos, who became the teacher in the Lyceum at Athens after Aristotle, regarded enthusiasm as a disease.

17. Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno concur in the statement that the soul is itself of a several-fold nature. The “immortal principle” which proceeds from the Creator consists of the faculty of intelligence, the *epistêmê* or overmind, and sound judgment. The “mortal part” comprises the *thumos* or passionate, aggressive quality, and the *epithumetic*, appetitive, or receptive nature.

18. Plato declares in the *Timaios* that the faculty of divining is active only when the understanding or reasoning faculty is in abeyance, fettered by sleep or aliened by disease or the entheastic rapture. Plutarch imputes its activity to a certain *crasis* or condition of body through which it becomes separated from the consciousness of objects and matters that are immediately present.

19. Abammon seems to clash with the modern dogma of evolution except as associated with the hypothesis of the Rev. Dr. James Martineau, that whatever is evolved or unwombed has been before involved.

20. Greek, *mania*, rage, madness, entheasm, religious excitement, or rapture. The term is used here to denote the rapture incident upon being possessed by a superior power. Plato remarks in the *Phaidros*: “There are two kinds: one arising from human diseases and the other by a digression from fixed habits.” He subdivides the divine *mania* or entheasm into four kinds, and assigns the *mantic* or prophetic inspiration to Apollo, mystic inspiration to Dionysos, poetic inspiration to the Muses, and the passion of love to Aphrodite. This last, he declares to be the best of all enthusiasms and of the best origin, describing it as “the right hand of the divine *mania*, and the source of greatest blessing to us.”

21. Some exhibition of this kind is described by the Apostle Paul in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. “If,” says he, “the whole assembly come together to the same place and all prattle in tongues, and common men should come in, or unbelievers, will they not say that you are raving?” Hence he counsels that only two or three should speak in turn, and one interpret; but if nobody present is capable of this, they should keep silence, and speak only to themselves and to God: “for not of tumult is he a god, but of tranquillity.” (Ovid; *Fasti* IV, “The attendants beat the brass, and the hoarse-sounding hides. Cymbals they strike in place of helmets, tambourines for the shields; the pipe yielded its Phrygian notes.”)

There is evidently a deeper meaning in all this than is commonly apprehended.

22. The *Korybantes* are variously described. Their cult was identified or closely allied to that of the Kabeirian divinities, and that of the Great Mother. It was celebrated in the islands of the Aegean Sea and in Phygia. Music, dancing, processions, and

ecstatic frenzy were characteristics.

23. Sabazios, Sabaoth, or Sabbat, the god of the Planet Saturn, was better known as Bacchus or Dionysos, and was also styled in Semitic countries, Iao or Yava. His worship was more or less associated and identified with that of the Great Mother, under various designations, and it was characterized by phallegoric processions, dances, mourning for the slain divinity, and the Watch Night. It came from Assyria as its peculiar symbols, the ivy or kissos, the spotted robe or Nimr, and the Thyrsos, indicate. The name Zagreus the Kissos and nimr remind us of Kissaia or Asiatic Ethiopia, and the Zagros mountains occupied by the Nimr. Assyria was called "the land of Nimrod." -Amos VIII.

24. Proklos declared that the choral songs of Olympus were adapted to produce ecstasy. Plato describes an audience in Ion, comparing it to a series of iron rings connected by a chain and moved by the lodestone: "Some hand from one Muse and some from another," he remarks, "some, for example, from Orpheus, others from Musaios, but the greater part are inspired by Homer and are held fast by him."

25. In these rites the worshippers danced, forming a circle around the altar. See also I Kings, XVIII, 26. With the Korymbantians, this represented a guard about the Demiurgos or Creator; with the Kuretes, it denoted a protecting of the divine maid Kora.

26. Servius remarks that the Sacred observances of Father Liber, the Roman Bacchus, related to the purification of souls. This cleansing, as here declared, was considered to be not only from contamination acquired by coming into the conditions of physical existence, but also from guilt actually incurred.

27. Mr. Thomas Taylor refers us to the treatise accredited to Plutarch, on the "Failure of the Oracles" in which this matter is explained at length. The faculty of divining, this author declares, is farthest withdrawn from this present condition by that idiosyncrasy of body which favors the development of the entheistic condition. "The soul does not acquire the faculty of divining when clear of the body," he says, "for it has the same before, but is blinded by the commixture and confusion which it has with the body." Hence he argues, "we do not divest divination either of divine origin or of rationality, seeing that we allow it for its subject, the Human Soul, and for its instrument an aura or exhalation productive of the entheistic rapture."

28. Modern writers have conjectured that this exhalation was of the nature of nitrous protoxide. Such a deriving of prophetic inspiration from "laughing gas" has a resemblance to the concept that Emanuel Swedenborg acquired his illumination by drinking coffee, and is equally absurd.

29. Apollo and Dionysos Zagreus his hearth-mate were the divinities at Delphi.

30. The staff, rod, wand, scepter, or baton, as the symbol of authority, possesses the greatest antiquity. It appears in mythology as the scepter of Zeus charged with lightning, the caduceus of Hermes that lulled to sleep, the staff of Asklepios with healing virtue, the thyrsos of Bacchus, and the club of Heracles. Every Roman Senator carried a wand. The rods of Moses and Aaron, the staff of the prophet, the wand of Kirikê Kirikê, the magic divining staff and the bishop's crosier belong in the same category.

31. Branchidia or Didyma was situated near Miletus in Ionia. The temple was very ancient. It was twice burned by the Persians. The structure was of the Ionic order, but a straight road, which led from it to the sea, was bordered on each side with statues on charis of a single block of stone with the feet close together and the hands on the knees precisely as at the avenues of the temples of Egypt. There was an Egyptian influence in

Asia Minor and the islands of the Levant in very ancient times.

32. The divinity here indicated belonged to the pantheon of Egypt. He was probably Imopht or Emeph the Asklepios of the Egyptians.

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Chapter 8. The Divining Art Universal.
Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

It clearly appears, therefore, that the technic of divining at the oracles accords with all the hypotheses which we have put forth in respect to the mantic art. For such a faculty, being inseparable from the constitution of places and bodies that are subjects of it, or preceded by a motion limited by number, cannot always prognosticate in the same manner things occurring in every place. But being separate and free from places and things that are measured by the enumerations of times as though superior to those existing in relations to time, and from those that are held fast by place, it is present with objects equally wherever they are, and is always conversant at once with those coming into existence in time, and likewise includes in one the truth of all things by virtue of its own separate and superior essence.

If, indeed, we have stated these things rightly, the divining power of the gods is not encompassed in parts by anything – neither by place, nor by a divisible human body, nor by a soul that is held fast in a single form of divisible qualities, but being separate by itself, and indivisible, it is present everywhere in entirety with those who are able to receive it. Not only does it shine from without, and fill all things, but it likewise permeates all the elements, occupies the earth, and air and fire and water, and leaves nothing destitute of itself – neither living beings nor things sustained from the realm of nature. On the contrary, it imparts from itself an allotment of the faculty of foreknowing to some in a greater and to others in a smaller degree. Existing itself before all things, it is able, by reason of its separateness, to permeate and fill all things, according as every one is able to receive of it.

DECEPTIVE DIVINATION.

Let us now examine after this the other form of divination which is private and not public, concerning which thou sayest as follows: “Others are affected by standing upon indented marks, ¹ like those who have been filled from an imperceptible inflowing of the divine pleroma.” Hence because of those who make a bad use of this form of divining it is by no means easy to include it in a single explanation. On the contrary, being near at hand, and in a pernicious degree superficial, it is employed by many persons in falsehood and deception which may not be tolerated. Nor is there any god present at all, but a certain motion of the soul is produced which is repugnant to the gods, and allures from them a certain indistinct and phantom-like apparition which

sometimes, because of the transient power, is likely to be thrown into disorder by the spiritual emanations of evil daemons. But an appearing which chances to be genuine is likewise in other respects distinct, pure, unchangeable, true, and both inaccessible and unobstructed by spirits of a contrary temper. In like manner the darkness, from its peculiar nature, is not able to remain under the glowing sunshine, but suddenly becomes totally invisible, goes completely away from where it was, and takes itself off. So also when the power of the gods shines forth in many directions, pervading everything with its benefits, the mob of evil spirits has no field of activity and is not able to manifest itself in any way, but, on the contrary, falls back as nothing into non-existence, having no nature for activity at all when superior beings are present, and not being able to throw them into disorder when they are giving forth light.

²

Whereas, therefore, there is such a difference in each of these classes, I will make use of no other tokens to distinguish them than those which thou hast mentioned. For when thou affirmest that “some are affected by standing on indented marks” thou seemest to signify nothing else than the cause of all the evils relating to these things. For there are some who overlook the whole matter of the Perfective Vision, not only in regard to the one making the invocation, and also the Beholder, but they likewise hold in contempt the arrangement of religious worship and the most sacred ordeal of encountering prolonged penances, ³ and also reject the sacred laws and ordinances and other Holy Rites. They consider the standing upon indented marks to be enough, and imagine that by doing this for a single hour there is a certain spirit introduced. Yet how may anything worthy or perfective take place from these things? Or how is the eternal and real essence of the gods to be combined in sacred operations with temporary performances? Hence, through things of this character, such silly men go entirely astray, and are not worthy to be numbered with diviners.

OTHER MODES OF ENTRANCEMENT.

In regard to another kind of divination thou makest this statement, namely: “Others who understand themselves in other respects become divinely inspired through the fancy: ⁴ some taking darkness as accessory, others employing certain potions, and others depending on singing and magic figures. Some are affected by means of water, others by gazing on a wall, others by the hypæthral air, and others by the sun or some other of the heavenly luminaries.”

All this kind of divination which thou describest as being of numerous species may be comprehended in a single faculty, which may be denominated the “Bringing of Light.” This evidently shines, however, with a divine luminance upon the ether-like and brilliant vehicle ⁵ which surrounds the soul, from which vehicle the divine imaginations, being set in motion by the will of the gods, take possession of the faculty of imagination in us. For the whole life of the soul and all the faculties in it being subject to the gods, are set in motion in whatever manner the leaders may desire.

This takes place in one of two ways: from the gods being present in the soul, or from the shining into it of a light coming beforehand from them. In either case the divine

presence and the illumination are entirely separate. The attention and the reasoning faculty of the soul are therefore conscious of the events, because the divine light does not extend to these. The fancy, however, is divinely affected. As it varies entirely from the habits of human beings, it is not excited from itself to the modes of imagination, but from the gods.

Since, however, the contrary principle, through a change throughout and absence from itself, is capable of receiving its contrary, or that which is akin or homogeneous through similarity may receive its like, the light-bringers likewise take the darkness as an auxiliary, and likewise employ the light of the Sun or of the Moon, or, in short, the open air, for illuminating.

Sometimes, however, they also make use of established conditions such as are familiar to the gods that are about to be brought thither, or chants or dramatic compositions; these having been suitably prepared for the order of reception, the coming and appearing of the gods. Sometimes, again, they conduct the light through water, since this medium, being transparent, is well adapted for the receiving of light. ⁶ But at other times they cause it to shine upon a wall, having before-hand made ready in the best manner a place in the wall for the reception of the light, by sacred delineations. of engraved figures, and at the same time fixing it firmly in a solid place so that it may not be too much diffused.

There are also many other ways for bringing the Light: but they may all be reduced to one, namely: to its illumination in whatever way and through whatever instrumentalities the gods may choose to shine forth. Since not only the light is from without, and alone possesses everything subject to the will and intelligence of the gods, but, what is more important, it has a sacred irradiation derived not only under the æther on high but also from the air or from the moon or the sun, or some other celestial sphere, it is manifest from all these things that such a mode of divination is unlimited, primary in operation, and worthy of the gods.

DIVINING BY AUGURY.

Come, then, let us pass on to the mode of divining which is carried into operation through a human technic, and involves much guessing and expecting. In regard to this thou speakest as follows: "Some have likewise established the technic of searching the future by means of entrails, birds and stars." There are also many other such technics, but these are sufficient for the exhibiting of every form of the art of divining. So, then, to tell the whole story this method makes use of many signs or symbols which have in various ways been made efficacious by the gods. From the divine tokens, according to the relationship of things to the signs that have been exhibited, the technic in some way arrives at conclusions, and guesses at the augury, inferring it from certain probabilities. The gods, then, create the signs either through the agency of nature, which is itself subservient to the generation of everything both general and particular, or else through the daemons that operate in the generative sphere, who, taking control of the component parts of the universe, and of partible bodies, and likewise of all living things in the world, bring out with facility the phenomena which are pleasing to the gods. They

make known beforehand, symbolically, the purpose of the divinity that is about to come, as explained by Herakleitos, "neither telling nor concealing, but indicating by signs." Thus, by foreshadowing, they impress, as by a likeness, the manner of the creation. In like manner, therefore, they generate all things by means of images, and likewise signify them beforehand through instituted emblematic representations. Equally, also; by this means, they excite our faculty of understanding to a greater acuteness. Let these things, therefore, be determined in common by us in regard to all technic of this kind that men have devised.

In particular, however, the soul of living animals, the daemon that is set over them, the atmosphere, and likewise the motion of the atmosphere, and the revolution of the surrounding sky, transform the entrails in various ways as may please the gods. A sign of this is that they are often found without a heart, or in some way dismembered of some of the principal parts, ⁷ of which, when they are deprived, it is not at all possible that the life should remain in the animals. Not only, however, the impulse of their own soul moves the birds, but the guardian daemon of the animals also sets them in motion. Likewise, the circulation of the atmosphere, and the potential force which passes down from the sky into the air, making everything in harmony with the divine purposes, lead them in conformity to what the gods arrange originally. The most important sign of this is that of the birds themselves tearing, and many times actually destroying, themselves; for this is a thing not natural for anything to do. But this art of divining is a thing of a superior nature, so that it is a something else accomplishing these things through the birds.

Moreover, the circuits of the stars come near to the perpetual revolutions of the sky, not only in space but also in powers and in the radiations of light. But they are moved in whatever way the gods in the sky impel them. For the most absolutely pure and supreme principle of the atmosphere being closely affiliated to fire, they, as the gods make the sign, are also lighted up immediately. If, however, any one thinks that certain auras of the divinities of the sky are given off into the atmosphere, he will not have conjectured anything foreign to what is often performed in the divine art of divination. The oneness, and also the sympathy, of everything, and likewise the simultaneous motion of the parts that are farthest away as though they were near by and parts of one animate being, cause the sending of these signs from the gods to human beings, first through the sky and then through the atmosphere appearing to men, especially brilliant.

This, then, becomes manifest through the statements that have been made, namely: That the gods, making use of many intermediate instrumentalities, send forth signs to human beings, employing not only the services of daemons, but also of souls and the whole realm of nature; they likewise leading all these, their followers, from the first beginning throughout the cosmic universe, and transmitting the impulse which goes forth from them whither they please. Being, therefore, themselves separate from all and free from all relationship and common nature with those in the region of generated existence, they lead everything in the realms of generation and production according to their own purpose.

This explanation in respect to the art of divination agrees accordingly with the theory of

the creation and foreknowledge of the gods, for it does not drag down the mind of the superior beings to this region and to us; but instead, this, remaining stable in itself, turns to itself not only the signs, but likewise the whole art of divining, and discovers them proceeding from it.

ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF DIVINATION CORRECTED.

Thou askest likewise, in relation to “the nature of divination, what it is and what is its peculiar character.” This we have explained already, both generally and specifically. But thou, first of all, hast put forth this statement: “The diviners all say that they arrive at the foreknowing of the future through gods or daemons, ⁸ and that it is not possible for others to have any inkling of it – only those who have command over the things to be.” Thou then remarkest, as if hesitating: “I dispute whether the divine power is brought down to such subserviency to human beings, as, for instance, not to hold aloof from any who are diviners with barley meal.”

But when thou appliest the term “subserviency” to the providential care and protection that we enjoy thou failest to understand aright the vastness of the power of the gods, the goodness transcending and the causality which includes all things. Besides, thou overlookest the mode of energy, that it is neither attracted downward nor turned toward us, but precedes us, as being separate from us and entirely distinct. It, indeed, imparts itself to the recipients, but in this it neither goes out from itself nor becomes lessened, nor is subservient to those that participate of it. On the contrary, it makes use of all as being subservient to itself.

The observation which thou hast suggested appears to me to be a complete mistake in another particular. If we take for granted that the doings of the gods are similar to those of men, there will a question arise as to how they are performed. For in supposing that because we ourselves undergo changes, and are sometimes affected by the conditions of various affairs to which we are attending, on this very account thou dost, in the concept that the power of the gods is at all subservient to those that are governed by it, conjecture wrongly. Neither in the making of worlds nor in the foresight of the realm of generated existence nor in the divining in respect to it, is the divine power ever attracted from its sphere to those that participate of the outflow. But, on the other hand, it shares its benefits with all, and makes all to be like itself. It not only serves those abundantly that belong to its circle, but the more it remains by itself so much the more it is filled from its own stores. It does not itself become of the quality of those that participate of it, but it renders its partakers similar to itself. It preserves them in every way, but remains complete in itself; it includes them within its own sphere, but at the same time is. neither mastered nor encompassed by any one of them. In vain, therefore, does an undermeaning of such a kind cause annoyance to individuals, for the god is not divided and portioned out as a commodity among the different modes of divining, but without such division it produces them all. Nor does he bring different matters to completion separately in regard to time, and in different ways, but operates them all together at once and according to one design. Nor is he held fast in respect to signs, as being encompassed by them or parceled out by them. On the other hand, he arranges signs in himself in a single order, and likewise includes them in one concept, and issues them

forth from himself according to a single purpose.

If, however, the power of the gods in this matter of prognostication extends to objects without soul, such as little pebbles, rods, certain trees, stones, wheat, or barley meal, ⁹ this is itself a most wonderful form of predicting by divine vaticination, because it is an imparting of soul to things that are without soul, and motion to objects that of themselves are incapable of moving, and makes everything clear and knowable, participant of the reasoning faculty, and definable according to the measures of intelligence, and yet having nothing of rationality by themselves.

Another thing which the god brings to notice in the displays appears to me to be nothing less than a superhuman wonder: for as he sometimes makes a man of moderate attainments and understanding utter apothegms full of wisdom, through which it is made plain that the occurrence is not a human, but a divine performance, so through agencies destitute of knowledge he reveals perceptions which were prior to any knowing. At the same time the god makes it manifest to individuals that the signs and tokens which are exhibited are worthy of belief, and that he is superior to the realm of nature, and exalted above it.

Thus the things in the realm of nature which were unknown he makes known, and those which are unknowable he makes knowable. Not only does he, through these, implant sagacity in us, but he also, through everything that is in the universe, sets our mind in motion toward the knowledge of the truth – of the things that are, of the things that are coming into existence, and the things that will be – the Past, Present and Future.

From these considerations it is evident, I think, that the mode of divination is absolutely contrary to those ways which thou dost mistrust and suppose; for it is authoritative, and first in operation, and likewise self-governing and transcendent, encompassing all things in itself, but not itself encompassed by any, or enclosed in limited conditions by its participants. On the other hand, it takes its place above, and exercises authority over all as a single assemblage, without distinctions, but ruling over the whole with unlimited power, and giving forth signs and portents collectively.

Thou wilt, therefore, from these premises, easily resolve those doubts which are personal and annoying to many individuals, and duly raise thyself to the perception of the spiritual, divine and undeceptive foretokens of the gods that are manifested from all sources.

We contend, therefore, that the divine power is not brought down into the signs and symbols of the art of divination.

THE DIVINITIES PRESENT AT THE RITES.

Another controversy now awaits us, not less in significance than the one which has just been finished. Thou introducest it at once in regard to the divinities that are the causative powers in the art of divination, by questioning “whether a god or angel or daemon, or some other such being, is present at the manifestations (epiphanies) or at

the divinations or at any of the Sacred Performances.”

The simple reply which we make to this is that it is not possible for the Divine Performances to be carried on in a manner befitting sacred matters without some one of the superior races being present, beholding and making the Sacred Performances complete. ¹⁰ Accordingly, when the procedures are perfect, sufficient of themselves, and without defect, gods are their directors. But when they are only suitable for the intermediary races (as angels and daemons), and fall somewhat short of what is due to the highest beings, then they have angels to make them complete and make the exhibitions. But those which are classed as lowest and last are assigned to the daemons to be performed.

The successful accomplishment of the divine services is always confided to some one of the superior orders. Since it is not permissible, without the gods, even to prattle a word in respect to the gods, it may be taken for granted that godlike achievements and all forms of prognostication are not conducted successfully except with the gods present. For the human tribe is weak and of little account; it sees but little, and possesses nothing by nature. But for the inherent tendency in it for wandering, disorder and unstable changing, the one remedy is whether it may participate, so far as it is able, of some portion of the divine light. But whoever seeks to exclude this does the same thing as those who attempt to develop a soul from objects that are without soul, or generate mind from those destitute of mind. For he proposes without the agency of a divine cause to create divine works from materials that are not divine.

Let it be conceded, then, that a god or daemon or angel is bringing the superior rites to completeness. We do not grant in the least what thou throwest out as an acknowledged fact, namely: That the superior beings bring these things to pass, “as having been drawn thither, through us, by the necessities created by the invocation.” For the god, and the entire chorus of superior beings connected with him, are superior to necessity – not alone from the necessity which is induced by human beings, but also that necessity which holds the world in its grasp. Hence, it is not the province of the nature which is non-material, and not receptive of any acquired order, to be subservient to any necessity coming in from elsewhere.

Then, again, the invocation and the rites performed by the adept in superior knowledge bring them to the superior races and attach them together by becoming assimilated and of the same household; but they never bring their operations to completion by compulsory endeavor. Hence, the occurrences are not observed. in the persons entranced, as thou thinkest, the theurgic adept being in a passive condition; nor is divining effected through a necessity, a passive condition being dominant in the delivering of the oracle. For these conditions are foreign to the essence of the superior beings, and in other respects unsuitable.

DIVINATION PURELY A DIVINE OPERATION.

On the contrary, neither is the cause of these manifestations of the superior beings like an intermediate instrumentality, nor does the person who makes the invocations act

through the one that is entranced; and to assert these things is sacrilegious. For this is much more true, namely: That God is all, he is all-powerful, he has filled all from himself, and he alone is worthy of highest regard, praise and supreme honor. ¹¹

What is human when it is compared with the divine is base, insignificant, and a mere plaything. Hence, I laugh when I hear that the god is automatically present with certain persons or objects, whether through the Cycle of nativity or through other causes. For if he is controlled by the Cycle of nativity the unbegotten divinity will not then be the superior; nor will he, as he is himself arranged with certain things with reference to other causes, be primarily a cause of all things. These suggestions, therefore, are also unworthy of the conception which we should entertain in regard to the gods, and are entirely foreign to the performances which take place in Theurgy. ¹²

Such inquiry, however, is subject to the same condition which the many experience in regard to the Creation of the universe and providence. For not being able to learn what is the nature of these, and likewise discarding the deep thoughts and arguments of individuals in respect to the divine beings, they take all recognition of providence and creation entirely away from them.

We are accustomed to meet these individuals with the answer that the divine mode of creation and guardianship is different from what they suppose of such things, and that it is not proper for them, because of their ignorance, to reject it as not having existed from the beginning. So, likewise, it may be pleaded with thee that all foreknowledge and doing of sempiternal works are the works of gods, and are neither performed through necessity nor through different human causes, but wrought through such causes. as the gods alone know.

DIVINATION NOT A FACULTY OF THE SOUL.

Passing these things by accordingly, we may now, with good reason, proceed to explain the second cause which thou hast set forth, namely: "That the soul utters and imagines these things, and that they are peculiar conditions of it, which have been produced from little sparks." ¹³

On the contrary, neither are these things from the realm of nature, nor does the reasoning faculty accept them. For everything that comes into existence comes from a specific cause, and that which is of kindred nature is brought to pass by that which is akin to it. But the divine operation is not automatic, for such a thing is without a cause and not in any way arranged. Nor is it the product of a human cause, for this is alien to it and subordinate, and that which is more perfect cannot issue from that which is less perfect. ¹⁴ All operations, therefore, which are like divinity in their nature have their inception from a divine cause. For the human soul is held fast by a solitary ideal, and is kept in the dark by the body on every side. Whether this condition is termed the river Amaletê or water of Lethê or ignorance and insanity or bondage through passive conditions or deficiency of vital force, or some other evil thing, it will not be a name sufficiently expressive to denote its badness: ¹⁵

The soul being held by such restraint, how may it become sufficient for such an operation? It is by no means reasonable to suppose such a thing. For if we seem at any time to be able to effect a participation, and to be enlightened by the gods, it is by this alone that we derive benefit of the divine energy. On this account, the soul not possessing intrinsic excellence and sagacity, it does not participate of the divine operations. Indeed, if such operations pertained to the soul, every soul, or at least the solitary one endowed with intrinsic completeness, would perform them. Now, however, not one or another of them is sufficiently prepared for this. On the contrary, so far as relates to the divine energy, even the perfect soul is incomplete.

The theurgic energy, therefore, is different, and the successful accomplishment of the divine works is enabled by the gods alone. If the fact were otherwise this would not be at all necessary in the service of the gods, but we would have the divine boons in this case without religious worship. If these opinions are like madness, and without sense, it is proper to discard such undermeanings as furnishing a cause worthy of mention for the fulfilling of divine operations.

DIVINATION NOT OF TWOFOLD ORIGIN.

Thirdly, thou subjoinest the following statement, namely: "That there is a mingled form of substance produced from our own soul and from the divine inbreathings from without." Is it any more true than the others?

Look at this more critically, lest from being entangled by its apparent plausibility, we pass it by without noticing. For if any one thing is, perchance, brought into existence from two, it is generally alike in form, alike in nature, and alike in essence. So the elements coming together into the same association produce one specific element out of many, and many souls are joined together into one entire soul. Certainly, however, anything which is completely taken away cannot ever become one with that which is going forth from itself; neither may the soul be constituted of one form of substance with the divine inbreathing. For if the divine nature is unmingled the soul is not commingled with it, and if it subsists unchangeable it will not be changed through any combination from its simple essence into any community of elements with anything else.

Certain individuals of former times were, therefore, of the opinion that "small sparks" kindled up divine ideals in us, which, whether they are from the realm of nature or of the nature of the body in some other manner, cannot be changed from things of chance into things divine. In the present instance, however, the suggestion is made that the soul is a joint element in the divine commixture. This is equivalent to saying that the soul is equal in importance to the gods, and likewise that it imparts to them a certain constituent and receives one from them in return; and also that it imposes conditions upon the superior beings and is itself limited in its sphere by them.

But there are others who affirm what is most mischievous, namely: That the gods, being the interior cause in the order of the elements, coexist in the beings that are brought into existence by them, and that there will be an outbirth that will be produced since time,

and of a commingling during time, and that it will encompass the gods in itself. But in such event what is this commingled form of substance! For if it is both, conjoined together (the soul and the divine inbreathing), it will not be one single thing from out of two, but as composed from two put together at random. But if it is an entity, other than both, then we must admit that things eternal will be subject to change, and the divine essences will differ in nothing from physical ones in the realm of generated existence. The supposition that an eternal being may be brought into the world through nativity is absurd; but to imagine that anything consisting of eternal qualities will be dissolved is more absurd.

By no means, therefore, has such an opinion in respect to divination any reasonableness; but now we must consider this notion paradoxical, whoever may propose it, whether one or two.

Notes:

1. Goethe indicates a magic power in certain marks or characters when he describes Mephistopheles as fastened inside the chamber by the pentagram:

“I must confess, my stepping o'er
Thy threshold a slight hindrance doth impede:
The Wizard's Foot doth me restrain.”

2. Proklos explains that when initiatory ceremonies are taking place, as in spiritual manifestations generally, baser spirits will often assume the guise of the superior genii, and draw away souls that are not pure. Hence the Chaldean Oracles declare that it is not proper to participate in them till purity is attained. “They enchant the souls and lead them away.” Proklos says again, “In the most sacred of the Perfective Rites, they say that the candidates first encounter the multiformed and many-shaped races which come to view before the gods are to be seen; but they go on to the Mystic Cave unswerving, and having been made secure by the Rites they receive the divine illumination without alloy into their bosoms, and being stripped, so to speak, they partake of the divine nature. This, I think,” he adds, “is what takes place in the spectacular manifestations.”

3. In all initiatory rites a probation takes place to test the fidelity and endurance of the candidates. The “Tortures” of the Mithraic initiations consisted of long fasting, exposure to the severity of the climate, and terrors of wild beasts and the execution of a capital sentence.

4. Greek, *fantastikon* (*Phantasia*, or imagination) is defined by Chrysippos and Plutarch as the faculty which reveals itself and its causes; *phantastikon* or fancy, the term here used, as a vain impulse of the mind with no real cause; *phantaston* as the imaginable, anything that may make an impression; *phantasma*, a phantom, an apparition.

5. The vehicle is called the “astral aura” by Paracelsus, and *Kamarupa* by Hindu sages.

6. Damaskios explains this operation: “There was a sacred woman who had a

nature divinely endowed in a wonderful degree. Pouring pure water into a glass cup, she saw in the water in the cup the ideal appearance of things about to take place, and foretold from the view things that would occur. But," adds he, "of such an experiment, we ourselves are not ignorant."

7. When Julius Caesar was assassinated it was affirmed by the Augurs, that the event was foreshadowed by the absence of a head to the liver of the animal sacrificed that day; and on the morning of the murder of the Emperor Pertinax the victims were said one of them to lack a heart, and the other, a liver.

8. There are three modes of forecasting: prophecy, divination and guessing; and they are referred respectively to divinity, daemons and observation of the course of things. Daemons appear to be the same as the "angels" of the Judaeian and Christian theology. "Both gods and daemons have a certain and unerring knowledge of things to come," says Proklos.

9. Various modes of divining were employed. We read that the patriarch Joseph divined with his cup (Genesis, xiv, 5): the Syrian ambassadors took the mode of reply from Ahab as a token (I Kings, xx, 33). The Skyths and other ancient peoples divined with rods of tamarisk. Laurel leaves were also used. The King of Babylon decided to lead his army against Jerusalem, after a divination with arrows (Ezekiel xxi, 21, 22). The lot was common; indeed it was supposed that the conditions of life in the earth were established by such allotment.

10. See Deceptive Divination, page 132.

11. Mr. Thomas Taylor adds this note: "God is all things causally, and is able to effect all things. He likewise does produce all things, yet not by himself alone, but in conjunction with those divine powers which continually germinate, as it were, from him, as from a perennial root. Not that he is in want of these powers to the efficacy of his productive energy, but the universe requires their cooperation, in order to the distinct subsistence of its various parts and different forms. For as the essence of the first cause, if it be lawful so to speak. is full of deity, his immediate energy must be deific, and his first progeny must be gods. But as he is ineffable and superessential, all things proceed from him ineffably and superessentially. For progressions are conformable to the characteristics of the natures from which they proceed. Hence the cooperative energy of his first progeny (the minor gods) is necessary to the evolution of things into effable, essential, and distinct subsistence. The supreme God, therefore, is alone worthy; but this is not to the exclusion of paying appropriate attention and honor to other powers that are subordinate to him, who largely participate of his divinity, and are more or less allied to him. For in reverencing and paying attention to these appropriately, we also attend to and reverence him. For that which we attend to, honor and esteem in them, is that alone which is of a deified nature, and is therefore a portion, as it were, of the ineffable principle of all things.

Mighty study and labor about these intermediate powers is necessary in order to our union with their ineffable cause. For as we are but the dregs of the rational nature, and the first principle of things is something so transcendent as to be even beyond essence, it is impossible that we should be united to him without media: viz., without the gods and their perpetual attendants, who are on this account, true saviors of souls. For in a union with the supreme deity our true salvation consists."

12. The sentiment here enforced is that no prayer or rite has any efficacy to attract a divine being, and so bring down God, but rather it exalts the worshipper to the Divinity. Proklos also says: "In the invocations and at the Autopsia, the divine essence seems after a manner to come down to us, when really we are extending ourselves to it instead."

13. PLUTARCH: Why the Oracles Cease to Give Answers. 39. – "The soul does not have the faculty of divining when clear of the body as from a cloud; but it is blinded by its commingling and confusion with the mortal nature."

14. Rev. JAMES MARTINEAU: Place of Mind in Nature. – "Surely nothing can be evolved that is not first involved. Evolution and prospection are inseparable conceptions. Go back as you will, and try to propel the movement from behind instead of drawing it from before, development in a definite direction toward the realization of a dominant scheme of ascending relations, is the sway of an over-ruling end."

15. "Amaletê" signifies carelessness, negligence; "Lethê" means the extinction of remembrances; ignorance is inability for real knowing. Plato in the "Republic," Book X, describes a vision in which the souls are seen in the act of selecting for themselves the quality of a new life in the earth. By the choice they make, their guardian daemon is allotted to them. Then they drink the water of Lethê "which no vessel contains" and forget all the past.

Irenaeos, cavilling at Plato, demanded how he knew all this; adding that if he knew part he ought to know all. He seems to have overlooked the fact of a mantic or supraconscious condition in which such things may be known as they are perceived, to an extent commensurate with the development of the intuitive faculty.

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Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

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Chapter 9. Demons

Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

Thy next supposition comes up now for consideration, namely: "That the Soul, through such activities, generates from itself a faculty of imagination in regard to the future, or else that the emanations from the realm of nature bring daemons into existence through their inherent forces, especially when the emanations are derived from animals."

These statements appear to me to exhibit a fearful disregard of the principles pertaining to divinity, and likewise those of the theurgic operation. For one absurdity appears at the outset, namely: that the daemons are generated and perishable things. ¹ But another one more woful than this is, that by this hypothesis those beings that are prior are produced from those that are posterior to themselves. For the daemons

existed already in some manner before soul and the faculties incident to the bodily structures. Besides these considerations, how is it possible that the energies of the divisible soul, which is held fast in a body, be transformed into essence and be separate by themselves outside of the soul? Or how may the faculties incident to the bodies, which have their very being in the bodies, become separate from them? Who is it that is freeing them from the corporeal framework and collecting the dissolved substance into one group? For a being of such a character will be a daemon preexisting before the placing of the component elements together. The statement, however, has also the usual perplexity. For how may divining be produced from things that have no oracular quality, and how may soul be generated from bodies that are without a soul? Or, to say the whole at once, how may the things which are more complete be produced from those which are less complete? The mode of producing appears to me likewise to be impossible. For to produce essence through the activities of the soul and through the powers in the bodies is not possible; for from the things which do not have it, essence cannot be developed.

Whence comes the imagination of that which is about to take place? From what does it receive the faculty of divining? For of the things which have been sown anywhere through generation we absolutely never see anything possessing more than what is imparted to it from the first parentage. But it seems that the imagination may receive a certain superior addition from what has no being; unless it may be said that the daemons get a foothold upon the matter from the sacrificed animals, and that, being brought under their influence, they are moved in respect to it by a common sympathy. According to this opinion, therefore, the daemons are not generated from the forces inherent in bodies, but being at the lead of them, and existing before them, they are moved in like manner with them. Granted that they are thus exceedingly sympathetic, yet I do not see in what manner there will be anything true in regard to what is to come. For the foreknowing and forecasting of the future do not come within the range of a sympathetic power, nor a nature belonging to the realm of matter, and held fast in a specific place and body; but, on the contrary, the faculty must be free in respect to everything.

Let the supposition which thou hast made receive these corrections.

CONCERNING ORACULAR DREAMS.

Immediately after this, observations are brought forward as of one that was wavering in regard to the nature of divination; yet as they are advanced there is an endeavor apparent to overturn the art entirely. We will, therefore, direct the discussion to both these conditions of the case. We will begin by first answering the former of them: "That during sleep, when we are not engaged with anything, we sometimes chance to a premonition of the future." It is not suggested that the source of the divination is from out of ourselves and that the one which accompanies it is from without. The two are closely allied together and are intimately interblended with each other. Hence, their operations in respect to these matters are carried out in the manner defined, and follow the causes which precede them, being allied to them in close relations. When, however, the cause is free from such attachments, and preexists by itself, the end is not marked out in

relation to us, but everything depends on influences outside. Now, therefore, it is likely to happen in such cases that the truth in the dreams does not come out in concert without ritual operations, and it often shines forth from itself. This shows that divination, being from the gods without, and endued with authority which is all its own, will, when it pleases, graciously reveal the future. Let these explanations be an answer of such a character.

A PECULIAR CONDITION OF SOUL NOT A SOURCE OF DIVINATION.

Afterward, in the endeavor to explain the nature of divination, thou doest away with it altogether. For if, as thou affirmest, “a condition of the soul” constitutes the source of divination, what person of sense will accord to a thing so palpably unstable and capricious foreknowledge that is normal and stable? Or, how can the soul that is discreet and constant as to the better faculties – those of the mind and understanding – be ignorant of what is to be, when the individual that is receptive as to disorderly and turbulent impressions throws the future wide open? For what in the world is peculiar in the passive condition to qualify it for the beholding of the things that possess real being? Why is not this condition a hindrance rather than an aid to the more genuine perception? Further, also, if the things in the world were placed together by means of passive conditions, the similitude of the passive conditions would be in close proximity to them. But if they are established through principles and through ideas there will be a different nature of foreknowledge, which will be quit of everything like passive condition.

Then, again, the passive condition is conscious only of what is going on and what is now in existence, but foreknowledge extends also to those things which as yet do not have being. Hence, foreknowledge is far different from a passive or susceptible condition.

Let us, however, consider thy arguments for such an opinion as thou hast put forward. Thy statement that “the senses are held in check” tends to the contrary of what thou hast before declared, for it is an evidence that no human phantasm is active at the particular time. But “the fumes which are introduced” are in close relationship to the god, but not to the soul of the Beholder. The “invocations” do not induce an inbreathing into the reasoning faculty or passive conditions of body in the worshipper, for they are perfectly unknowable and arcane; but they are uttered intelligibly to the god alone whom they are invoking. But what thou remarkest, “that by no means everybody, but only the more artless and young are suitable” for the procedures, demonstrates that such as these are more in condition as a receptacle for a spirit that enters from without and holds the subject entranced.

From these things, however, thou dost not conjecture rightly that the enthusiastic rapture is a passive condition; for the evidence follows likewise from these signs and tokens that it flows in from without, as an inbreathing. Let these things, therefore, so be with us.

DISEASE NOT A FACTOR IN DIVINATION.

After these conjectures there follows another, a descent from the entheast aberration to ecstasy or alienation of mind on toward a worse condition. It is declared, most irrationally, that the origin of the divining art is “the mania that occurs in diseases.” For it sets forth enthusiasm or divine inspiration as due to melancholia or the redundancy of black bile, the perverted conditions of drunkenness, and the fury incident to, rabid dogs. It is necessary from the beginning, therefore, to make the distinction of two species of ecstasy or entrancement, of which one causes degeneration to an inferior condition, and fills with imbecility and insanity; but the other imparts benefits that are more precious than intelligence. The former species wanders to a disorderly, discordant and worldly activity; but the latter gives itself to the Supreme Cause which directs the orderly arrangement of things in the world. The former, being destitute of real knowledge, is led aside from good sense; but the latter is united with those superior sources of wisdom that transcend all the sagacity in us. The former is constantly changing, but the latter is unchangeable. The former is contrary to nature, but the latter is superior to nature. The former brings down the soul into lower conditions, but the latter leads it upward. The former places the subject entirely outside of the divine apportionment, but the latter joins, unites him to it.

Why, then, does thy discourse lead off so much from the proposed hypothesis as to be turned from the things superior and beneficial to the worst evils of mania? For in what does the enthusiastic inspiration resemble melancholy or drunkenness or any other form of alienation originating from morbid conditions of the body? What oracle can ever be produced from distempers of the body? Is not a product of such a kind wholly a destruction, but divine possession a perfecting and deliverance of the soul? Does not the worthless trance happen at the same time with debility, but the superior enthusiastic rapture with complete reign? In short, to speak plainly, the latter, being in a tranquil condition as relates to its own life and intelligence, gives itself to be used by another; but the former, operating with its peculiar species, renders them utterly wicked and turbulent.

This difference is therefore the most palpable of all, as all operations by divine beings differ from others. For as the superior orders are completely apart from all the others, their operations are accordingly not like those of any other beings. When, therefore, thou speakest of the aberration of a divine being, let thy conception of it be free from all human “aberrations.” And if thou imputest to them “abstinence” similar to that of the priests, do not look upon human abstinence any more as being similar to it. But of all things, do not compare “diseases of the body, such as suffusions, and fancies set in motion by morbid conditions,” with the divine visions. For what have they in common with each other? Neither art thou at liberty to contrast “equivocal states of mind, such as may occur during abstinence and ecstasy,” with the sacred visions of the gods, which are defined by a single energy. But on the other hand, thou mayest not associate in mind the spectacles of the gods that are superlatively efficacious with “the apparitions got up by technical magic.” ² For the latter have neither the energy nor the essence nor the genuineness of the objects that are beheld, but only project bare phantasms that seem real.

All such questions, however, which lead away from the subject and carry the attention

from contraries to contraries, we do not consider as touching the hypothesis before us. Hence, having set them forth as foreign to the subject, we do not suppose it to be necessary to waste more time upon them, as they have been set in a disputatious way to lead us to wander from our course, but not with any curiosity of a philosophic character.

CONCERNING SPURIOUS AND GENUINE DIVINATION.

One will wonder, therefore, at the many and different suggestions of new points of argument which are evidently brought forward for the purpose of disputing. He will be astonished, with good reason, at the oppositeness of the opinions that are put forth to explain divining. It is affirmed that the whole art is only a matter of appearances produced by jugglers, there being nothing substantial, and likewise that it is exercised by persons who are impelled by emotion or disease, and are in a condition to dare anything of a delusive nature, and that it is possible for them to come upon the truth by chance. For what principle of truth, or what starting-point of something that may be understood, less or greater, will there exist in these individuals? We should not receive that as the truth, however, which comes in such manner by chances; as that also happens to be recorded of those who are borne along to no purpose. That, however, is not to be acknowledged as the truth in which the things are done in concert with those that are performing them; for these things coexist with the physical senses and with the perceptive faculties of animals. Hence, that which is done in this way has nothing that is its own, or divine, or superior to what is common in nature.

On the other hand, the truth which is to be regarded stands permanently in the same manner as respects operation. It has perfect knowledge present with it of existing things, and is itself of the same nature with the essence of things. It employs the stable reasoning faculty, and sees everything as existing in its perfectness, its fitness for use, and its dimensions. This truth, therefore, is in close connection with the art of divination. It ought accordingly to be much more than natural presentiment, such as the instinctive perceiving of earthquakes and great storms of rain, which is possessed by certain animals. From this a feeling in common, certain animals being acted upon together, or perceiving more or less accurately, through an acuteness of sense, things which are taking place in the atmosphere above but have not yet been brought to pass upon the earth. ³

If, then, these things which we are saying are true, although we may have received from nature a power to ascertain things, or though we feel what is going to take place, that we shall accept this kind of impression as oracular foreknowledge, yet it is similar to divining, except that in divination there is nothing wanting in certainty and truth, while the other is a matter of chance for the most part, but not always; perceiving correctly in regard to certain things but not in relation to all. Hence, if there is any instruction in the arts, as, for example, in pilotage or in medicine, which gives power to forecast the future, it does not pertain in any respect to the divine foreknowledge. For it reckons up what is to happen by probabilities and certain signs, and these not always credible; and they do not have the thing that is thus signified in a proper connection with that of which the signs are indicators. But with the divine foresight of things to be there are, before all,

steadfast perception, the unchanging assurance completely at one with the Causes, an indissoluble holding of everything to everything, and a knowledge always abiding of all things as being now present, and their province defined.

DIVINATION NEITHER FROM NATURE, ART, NOR FELLOW FEELING.

It is not proper to make this statement: "That the realm of nature, art, and the feeling in common of things throughout the universe as of the parts of one animal, contain foreshadowings of certain things with reference to others"; nor "that the bodies are so constituted as to be forewarnings from some to others." For these things, which are very clearly beheld, remove the traces of the divine oracular power in a greater or less degree. But it is not possible that any one should be bereft of it entirely. On the contrary, as in all things, the image of the good carries the god in it; so, also, a certain likeness of the divine oracular power, obscure or more active, appears to be in them. But none of these is such as the divine form of divination, nor may the one divine, unmingled form of it be characterized from the many phantasms which go down from it into the realm of generated existence. Nor is it proper, if there are any other false or delusive appearances, which are farther removed from genuineness, to bring these forward in the forming of a judgment of the matter. On the contrary, we must think of it as one single utterance, one arrangement, and according to one divine ideal and one intellectible and unchangeable truth.; and in like manner we must regard the change which may be taking place at different times, and in different ways, as denoting instability and discordance, and disrespect for the gods.

If, then, divination is truly a divine work of such a character, who would not be ashamed to attribute it to the agency of nature, that accomplishes its objects without thought, as though it had elaborated in us a power of divining, and had implanted it in a greater degree in some and in a less degree in others? For in those things in which men receive from nature the means for accomplishing their individual undertakings, even in these, certain aptitudes of nature take the lead. In those, however, in which there is no human agency in the inception, neither is the final result our own. And when a certain good, older and superior to our own nature, has been so arranged beforehand, it is not possible that any natural genius or cleverness in these things should have been engaged secretly in the matter. For with these things which are fully perfected there are also those which are imperfectly developed; but both are conditions of human beings. But of these conditions which we do not experience as human beings there will not, ever, be a preparation by nature. Hence, there is no seed of the divine oracular power in us from nature. If, on the contrary, however, any one should make the invocation by a certain more common and human mode of divining, let there be a natural preparation. But in regard to that which may be truly named the divine oracular art, which belongs to the gods, it is not right to think that this is insown from the realm of nature. For, indeed, both the different modes, and the indefinite one, follow more or less with this idea. For this reason this indefinite mode of forecasting stands separate from the divine oracular art which remains in fixed boundaries. Wherefore, if any one says that the art of divination has its being from out of ourselves, it is our duty to fight strenuously against this assertion.

But thou likewise makest this statement: "Examples are manifest by the things done, namely: That they who make the invocations carry stones and herbs, tie sacred knots and unloose them, open places that are locked, and change the purposes of individuals by whom they are entertained, so that, from being paltry, they are made worthy." All these things signify that the inspiration comes from without. It is necessary, however, not only to accept this beforehand, but also to define thoroughly what a specific inspiration is, which comes from duty, and produces the god-given art of divination. Otherwise, we shall not be fit beforehand, to give judgment on this subject, unless by applying its own peculiar sign to it and fit its own token to it as a seal.

CONCERNING SPECTRAL FIGURES AND MATERIALIZATION.

Thou also puttest forth this declaration: "Those who are able to reproduce the mystic figures (idola) are not to be held in low esteem." I shall wonder if any one of the theurgic priests who behold the genuine ideal forms of the gods should consent to allow them at all. For why should anybody consent to take idola or spectral figures in exchange for those that have real being, and be carried from the very first to the last and lowest! Do we not know that as all things which are brought into view by such a mode of shadowing are but imperfectly discernible, they are really phantoms of what is genuine, and that they appear good to the seeming but never are really so?

Other things are in like manner brought in, being carried along in the course of events, but nothing is rendered that is genuine or complete or distinct. But the mode of producing them is plain, for not God, but man, is the maker of them. Nor are they produced from single and intellectual essences, but from matter taken for the purpose.

What that is good can come into existence, that germinates from matter and from the powers material and corporeal which exist with matter and in bodies? ⁵ Is not the thing which owes existence to human art more impotent and of less importance than the persons themselves who gave it existence? By what art or skill is this spectral figure put into form? For it is said it is molded as by the skill of Demiurgus himself. But that skill is employed in the producing of genuine essences, never in the forming of mere spectral figures. Hence, the art of producing idola is a long way distant from Demiurgic creating. On the contrary, it does not preserve the analogy with Divine creating at all. For God creates all things, but not through the physical motions of things in the sky or by those of particled matter or by the forces thus divided. But instead, it is by thoughts put into activity, by purposes and non-material ideals, through the sempiternal and supermundane soul, that he constructs the worlds.

But the creator of the spectral figures, it is said, makes them as of the revolving stars. The thing does not have its existence in the way as it is imagined. For as there are unlimited powers possessed by the gods in the sky, the last and lowest of all these is that of the realm of nature. But again,, a part of this lowest power takes the lead by itself prior to generated existence, being inherent in the principles which contain the germs of things, and established in the immovable essences. The other part, however, existing in the perceptible and visible motions, and likewise in the auras and qualities from out of

the sky, exercises dominion over the whole visible order of things, in all which this last in the series rules as a deputed governor over the universal realm of visible existence in the places around the earth. But in the realm of visible existence, and in the qualities of the auras perceptible to the sense which are sent down from the sky, many different arts are brought into use, such as medicine ⁶ and gymnastics, and all others that harmonize with nature in their results. And what is more, the creating of spectral figures attracts from the auras a very indistinct portion of generative energy.

Hence, as the truth is so, it is right to make it known: That the individual creating the spectral figures employs in his procedures neither the revolutions of the heavenly bodies nor the powers which exist in them by nature; and, in short, he is not able to come in contact with them. But as he follows the rules of an art, and does not proceed theurgically, he deals with the last and most inferior emanations, manifestly, from their nature, about the extreme part of the universe. But these emanations being partially commingled with matter, I think that they are capable of changing to it, and likewise of taking new form and being modeled differently at different times. They likewise admit change of powers in these particulars from some to others. But such a diversity of energies, and the combination of so many powers pertaining to the realm of matter, are separated not only from everything of divine creation, but also from everything of natural production. For nature performs its own works after one plan, and, at once, by simple and uncomplicated operations. The fact remains, accordingly, that such a manner of producing spectral figures by a commingling about the lowest and a manifest celestial inflow, the things being yielded by the celestial nature, is by art.

SPECTRAL FIGURES UNSTABLE.

Why, then, it may be asked, does the projector of spectral figures, the man who creates these things, why does he disregard himself, when he is superior, and descended from superior beings? He appears, instead, to be trusting in specters destitute of soul, ⁷ only animated with the outward appearance of life, holding together externally a framework of diversified complexion and absolutely ephemeral in duration. Does anything genuine and true exist in them? On the contrary, nothing of the things fashioned by the ingenuity of man is unalloyed and pure. But do simplicity and uniformity of operation of the entire structure predominate in them? They are wanting in all. In regard to their visible composition they are brought together from out of manifold and incompatible substances. But is there a pure and complete power manifest in them? By no means. When any such multitude of auras, accumulated from many sources, has been mingled together, it is shown to be feeble and fleeting. Yet, except these things are as described, is there the stability in the apparitions which they affirm? There ought to be much; but they vanish more quickly than the idola that are seen in mirrors. For when the incense is placed upon the altar the figure is immediately formed from the vapor as it is carried upward, but when the vapor becomes mingled and dispersed into the whole atmosphere the idolon itself is immediately dissolved, and not a trace of it remains. Why, then, should this juggling be desired by the man that loves manifestations that are true? I regard it as worthy of no consideration. If they who make these spectral figures know that these things about which they are engaged are structures formed of passive material the evil would be a simple matter. Besides this,

they become in this similar to the apparitions in which they place faith. But if they bold to these spectral figures as to gods, the absurdity will not be utterable in speech or endurable in act. For into such a soul the divine ray never shines; for it is not in the nature of things for it to be bestowed upon objects that are wholly repugnant, and those that are held fast by dark phantasms have no place for its reception. Suchlike wonder-making with phantasms will, therefore, be in the same category with shadows that are very far from the truth.

NO DIVINE QUALITY IN SPECTRAL FIGURES.

But then thou affirmest further: "They watch the course of the heavenly bodies, and tell from the position and relation of one, with another whether the oracular announcements of the ruling planet will be true or false, or whether the rites which have been performed will be to no purpose, or will be expressive or arcane."

To the contrary, not on account of these things will these phantasms possess the divine quality. For the last and most inferior of the things in the realm of generated existence are moved by the courses of the heavenly bodies and are affected by the auras which go forth from them. No, indeed; but if any one shall examine these things carefully they will show the contrary. For how may it be that these things which are so easy to change in every respect, and are turned round in various directions by daemons from without, so as to be rendered of no importance, whether as oracular or in regard to promises or in relation to Perfective Rites or in other matters, as the case may be, shall contain in themselves any allotment of divine power, however small? What, then, are the powers which are inherent in various kinds of matter, the elementary constituents, of which daemons are formed? Verily, and indeed, they are not. For nothing of divisible sensitive bodies originates daemons; but these, instead, are themselves generated and watched over by daemons. Neither is anybody able to fashion the shapes of daemons as from a machine, but rather, on the contrary, he is himself fashioned and constructed by the daemons according as he partakes of a body possessing sensibility.

But neither is there any incidental number of daemons generated from the elements of things of sense, but, far otherwise, the number is itself simple in nature and is uniformly operative around compound natures. Hence, it will not possess things of sense older than itself, or more lasting; but as it excels sensible things in age and power, it imparts to them the constancy which they are able to receive. Perhaps, however, thou termost the idola daemons, applying such a designation wrongly; for the nature of daemons is one thing and that of the idola another. The rank of each is likewise very widely different. And also, indeed, the Chorus-leader of idola is different from the great prince of the daemons. ⁸ For this thou givest assent when saying that "no god or daemon is drawn down by them." Of what consideration would a sacred observance or a foreknowledge of the future be worthy which is entirely without participation, God or any other superior power. Hence, it is necessary to know what is the nature of this wonder-making art, but by no means to have faith in it.

FALSE AND TRUE DIVINATION.

Again, therefore, thy explanation of religious performances is still worse. It describes “a race of a tricky nature assuming all shapes, artful, and turning many ways, that personates gods and daemons, and souls of the dead, like, actors on the stage.”

In reply to these imputations I will relate to thee what I once heard from the prophets of the Chaldaeans.

The gods of truth, whoever they may be, are alone the bestowers of all things good. They consort with only good men; they are in intimate union with those who have been purified by the sacred discipline, and extirpate from them every bad quality and disorderly passion. When they shine upon these, then what is evil and daemonian gives way, and disappears from the presence of the superior beings as darkness vanishes before the light. Nor does the light by any chance cause any annoyance to the theurgic priests, and they receive from it every excellent quality of mind, are made perfect as worthy and decorous, are set free from disorderly passions, and purified from all irregular impulse. and likewise from godless and profane habitudes.

But those who are themselves impious wrongdoers, and who assail divine matters in lawless and disorderly ways, are not able, because of defective individual energy and lack of inherent power, to obtain intimate association with the gods. If, by reason of any contaminations, they are debarred from being with immaculate spirits, they become allied with wicked spirits, and are filled by them with the most pernicious inspiration. They become evil and profane, full of unbridled desires after pleasure, replete with badness, and likewise eager admirers of modes of life that are foreign to the nature of the gods; and, to speak briefly, they become like the evil daemons with whom they are now joined in their nature. These, then, being full of disorderly passion and badness, through their common nature attract the evil spirits to themselves and are themselves incited by them to every kind of wickedness. They grow together like beings of the same birth, as in a circle, joining the beginning with the end and returning in the other direction in like manner.

These things are sacrilegious misdeeds, full of impiety. They have been brought into the Sacred Rites irregularly, and their observance attempted in a disorderly manner by those who have come later. ⁹ At one time, as it seems, one god would be caused to be present instead of another at the komos, or mystic revel, and at another they would introduce evil daemons instead of gods, calling them rival gods. Never, when discoursing about Sacerdotal Divination, set forth these things as examples. For Goodness is certainly more opposed to intrinsic badness than those to that which is simply not good.

As, therefore, the profaners of temples fight against the religious service of the gods most of all, so also those who have to do with daemons that lead astray and are causes of excess undoubtedly take the lead in fighting against theurgists themselves. For not only is every evil spirit driven away by them, and is utterly overthrown, but every species of badness and every disorderly passion made an end of altogether. On the other hand; there is a free participation of benefits among the pure; they are filled from above from the fire of truth, and they have no “impediment” or hindrance to the good things of the

soul from bad spirits. Nor does there any arrogance or adulation or enjoyment of exhalations or force of violence greatly annoy them. On the contrary, all these, as though struck by a bolt of lightning, give way, and fall back without touching – not able even to approach them.

This kind of divination is immaculate and sacerdotal, and is likewise truly divine. It does not, as thou remarkest, require an umpire, whether me or some one else, in order that I may distinguish it out of many. On the contrary, it is itself distinct from them all, superior above them, sempiternal, preexistent, not admitting any parallel nor the arranging of any superiority in many respects, but is free by itself, and takes the lead in a single form over all. To this it is necessary that thou, and every one that is a genuine lover of the gods, should give himself wholly; for by such means, truth, which gives a good foothold, is obtained at once in divinations, and perfect excellence in souls, and with both these the way upward will be granted to the theurgists to the Intellectual Fire, which is placed before as the end of all knowledge and of every theurgic transaction.

To no purpose, therefore; thou bringest forward the notion which some entertain: That divination is the work of an evil daemon. For the notion is not worthy to be remembered in the speculations respecting the gods. At the same time, also, these individuals are ignorant of the difference between truth and falsehood, because they have been reared in darkness from the beginning, and likewise are not able to discern the principles from which these things are derived.

With these conclusions, therefore, let us bring to a close these explanations in respect to the nature of Divination.

Notes:

1. Plutarch in his treatise on “Oracles” speaks of Hesiod limiting the soul of a daemon and the life of a demigod, and also represents Xenokrates as saying that the nature of daemons is endued with the passions and perturbations of the mortal nature and the force and power of the divine.

2. The goetic art or “black magic.”

3. Ancient literature has preserved several incidents of this character. The tenth chapter of the book of “Daniel” throws considerable light upon the subject; and in the fifth chapter of the second book of the “Maccabees,” an apparition of an army maneuvering in the sky is described. The newspapers abound with accounts of dreams in which events were represented as they afterward actually occurred. This would seem to indicate that there is a world of reality about us, other than the spectacular region that we contemplate, and that scenes taking place here are copies of what has been enacted there already.

4. This process has again appeared in what is known as “materializing.” It is explained as the producing of the figure of an individual by surrounding it with material elements procured from the body of another person who is, during the time, in a dormant and inanimate condition.

5. Pythagoras and the philosophers who adopted his views describe matter as the source of evil. This is an Oriental doctrine, and was doubtless carried to the West by teachers sent out for the purpose. The same notions have more or less pervaded opinion ever since, and given rise to the impression that so many seem to entertain that everything physical is intrinsically vile and therefore to be repressed so far as possible. But the sentiment given by Plato in "Theætetos" would seem a more rational conception. "It is not possible that evil shall be destroyed," says Sokrates, "for it is necessary that there should always be something contrary to good. Nor can it be seated among the gods, but of necessity moves round this mortal nature and this region. Wherefore we ought to endeavor to fly hence as quickly as possible. But this flying consists in resembling God as much as possible, and this resembling is the becoming just and holy with wisdom."

6. Both Galen and Hippokrates insisted that astral knowledge is essential for physicians; and Galen derided those physicians who denied the necessity for such knowledge. He went so far as to declare medical men who were ignorant of astral learning, homicides. All the medical schools of Christendom and the "Moslem" world formerly taught astrology, and Nicholas Culpepper, in his Herbal, is careful to assign to each medicinal plant its astral relations.

7. Origen treated of these idola or spectral figures as things in motion, but not beings really alive; apparitions approaching the nature, of phantoms.

8. It may perhaps be well to remark that the prince of daemons here named is probably not the same personification as Beel Zebul of the Gospels. That personage is styled in the Greek Testament, Baal Zeboul, the lord of the house; and in astrology it will be borne in mind that every one of the planetary houses had its own chief.

9. It was usual at the Eleusinian Initiations, and others, to have a minor observance for those who did not reach the temple soon enough for the regular proceedings. Probably irregularities might occur on such occasions, but had to be guarded against.

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Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

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Come, then, let us look over the opposing propositions in their order, what they are, and what reason there is for them. And if we let ourselves go on a little more at length in regard to some, as though speaking indeed by particular authority and at our own convenience, thou shouldst wait and bear with us patiently. For in regard to the Supreme Sciences, if thou wouldst know them perfectly, it is necessary that great diligence shall be observed and likewise that they shall be investigated for a long time with rigorous exactness. Thou wilt, therefore, according to the present plan, as thou hast begun, put forward the questions at issue which constitute the topics for discussion, and I in my turn will give thee an answer.

Accordingly, thou sayest: "It perplexes me greatly to form a conception how they who are invoked as superior beings are likewise commanded like inferiors."

I will tell thee in reply the whole distinction in regard to the beings that are invoked that is worthy of a word; from which thou wilt have an intelligible explanation as to what may be and what may not be, in regard to the matters of which thou art asking. For the gods, the beings superior to us, by a purposing of the things that are beautiful, and likewise by an ungrudging affluence of benefits, bestow cordially the things that are suitable upon those who are worthy, compassionating the labors of the men in the Sacred office, but loving their children, their nurslings and pupils.

The intermediary races, ¹ however, are the ephors or directors of decision. They likewise advise what it is necessary to do and what it is well to desist from. They also help to just actions, but hinder from those that are unjust, and they likewise cause many who are endeavoring to despoil others unjustly, or to ill-treat or destroy some one, to undergo the same things which they are designing to perform to others.

There is, moreover, a certain other race of daemons present, irrational and destitute of judgment, to which has been allotted only a single faculty in the series, by the distribution to each of the function which has been arranged among the several divisions. As, therefore, it is the function of the sword to cut and to do nothing else than this, so also of the spirits distributed everywhere according to the differentiating necessity of the realm of nature, one class divides and another collects the things that come into existence. This, however, is well known from the manifestations. For the Charoneian cavities, ² as they are called, send forth a spirit or exhalation from their recesses, which is capable of destroying everything indiscriminately that happens to be there.

So, therefore, certain invisible spirits, each having by allotment a different function, are constituted to perform that office only as it has been arranged. If, then, any one shall undertake to celebrate the Perfective Rites in proper order, and shall change them in

another direction, and do something contrary to prescribed custom, there will be a particular injury for making use of the Sacred Rites in an unlawful manner. This is a topic, however, foreign to our discourse.

WHY SPIRITS ARE COMMANDED

4.2. Cp. Luck 121-22.

What, however, it is now proposed to investigate we sometimes behold as it takes place. For it happens in regard to the spirits that do not make use of a rational faculty of their own and have no principle of judgment, that they are commanded; and this is not unreasonable. For our understanding, being naturally endowed to reason and decide, in the same way as it has charge of affairs, and likewise comprehending many of the forces of life in itself, is accustomed to dominate the most irrational and those that have only a single energy complete. Hence it calls upon them as superior beings, because it is endeavoring to draw from the whole cosmic world that encompasses us the things which perfect us entirely in respect to the matters that are held among divisible things. But it commands them imperatively as inferiors, ³ because certain parts (of our nature while) in the world frequently are more pure and more perfect than (faculties) that extend to the whole cosmos; as, for example, if one is spiritual and intellectible and the other is wholly non-spiritual or belonging to the sphere of nature; for then the one that is less extended and developed is superior in authority to the one that is developed more amply, although it may be surpassed by the latter in the magnitude and extent of dominion.

There is, however, also another reason to be applied to these things, namely: There is a twofold prelude to the whole theurgic performance. The former, which is introduced as by human beings, which conserves our rank in the universe as it exists in the sphere of nature; and the latter, which is confirmed by divine tokens, exalted on high through being allied to the superior beings, and likewise led harmoniously after their beautiful order, which may also in all likelihood be invested with the external form of the gods. In accordance, therefore, with the difference of such a kind, the officiator very properly invokes the powers from everywhere as superior beings, in so far as the invoker is a human being, and in turn commands them as subordinate; since through the arcane symbols he is in a manner encompassed with the sacred dignity of the gods.

SUGGESTIONS IN REGARD TO INVOCATIONS

Yet in order to resolve the doubts of these things still more truly, we think it well, when making the invocations, to omit the supplications which appear to be directed to them as to human beings, and also the imperative expressions which are uttered with great force during the celebrating of the Rites. For if the communion of a harmonious friendship and an indissoluble combining together as being only one comprise the sacred work, nothing of achievements called human joins with it, to the end that it shall be truly of the gods and superior to human beings. Nor should the invocation be in such a manner as when we endeavor to bring distant objects to us, nor the supplication of the form addressed to beings separate and apart in such a manner as we pass something from

one to another. But energy of the divine Fire itself shines forth spontaneously in all directions, and being both self-called and self-operating, is active in like manner through all things, those alike that impart and those that can receive it.

The explanation which is now made is far superior, which does not assume that divine operations are accomplished by means of contrary or different natures, as things of nature are wont to be effected; but, instead, that every work is rightly accomplished through sameness, oneness and conformity of nature. If, then, we should make a distinction between the invoker and the invoked, the commander and the one commanded, the superior and the inferior, we should in some way transfer the contrariety of sex that is peculiar to generated beings to the unbegotten blessed natures of the gods. If, then, as is right, we disregard all these matters as being earth-born, but assign as being more precious that which is common and simple to the beings that are superior to the diversified conditions existing here, the first thing assumed by these questions will be at once completely answered, so that there will not be a single reasonable point of controversy left in regard to them.

KARMA OR ILLS FROM FORMER LIVES

What shall we say, then, in regard to the question, after the one just answered: "Why do the divinities that are invoked require the worshiper to be just, although they themselves when entreated consent to perform unjust acts?"

In reply to this I am uncertain in respect to what is meant by "performing unjust acts," as the same definition may not appear right both to us and to the gods. We, on the one hand, looking to that which is least significant, consider the things that are present, the momentary life, what it is and how it originates. The beings superior to us, let me say, know for certain the whole life of the soul and all its former lives; and if they bring on a retribution from the supplication of those who invoke them, they do not increase it beyond what is just. On the contrary, they aim at the sins impressed upon the soul in former lifetimes, which men, not perceiving, imagine that it is unjust that they shall fall into the misfortunes which they suffer.

The many are also generally accustomed to propose the same doubt in regard to Providence; that certain persons are suffering from wrong-doing, who had not wronged any one previously. For they are unable here to reason as to what the soul is, what its entire life has been, the magnitude of its great errors in former lives, and whether it is now suffering these things for what it did formerly. Then also there are many unjust acts which elude human cognizance, but which are well known to the gods, since the same view of justice is not maintained by mankind generally. On the contrary, men define justice as the independent action of the Soul and the assigning of merit according to the established laws and the ruling conditions of civic life. The gods, I assure you, give their judgment of whatever is just, looking to the whole orderly arrangement of the world, and to the joint relation of the souls with the gods. Hence the judgment of what actions are right is different with the gods from what it is with us. We cannot wonder at this, if we do not in most matters arrive at the high and absolutely perfect judgment which is exercised by the superior beings. But what hinders justice to every one individually and

with the whole family of souls, especially in a much superior manner from being as would be approved of the gods? For if a sharing of the same nature by souls when they are in bodies and when they are apart from bodies effects an intimate alliance to the common life and order of the world, it is also necessary that the payment of the requirements of justice shall be demanded to the uttermost, and especially when the magnitude of the wrongs done by the one soul in former terms of existence exceeds the fullest extent of the single punishment following upon the offenses.

If, however, any one should add other explanations, by which he seeks to make plain in a different way the maintaining of justice by the gods, or as it is determined by us, there may result from them a way for us in regard to the matters under consideration. But for me the rules alone which have been already laid down are sufficient for the purpose of manifesting generally the race of superior beings, and including everything in relation to the healing influence in the punishments.

GOOD ONLY IS FROM THE GODS

In order, therefore, that we may from our abundance decide the contest against the assumption now under discussion, we will, if agreeable to thee, consider as granted the contrary of what we have argued, namely, that unjust things are performed in the proceedings, the invocations. It is evident at once, therefore, that the gods are not to be accused of these things. For they who are good are causes and authors of good things; and the gods are good in their very essence. They accordingly do nothing unjust; hence it is necessary to seek for other causes of the things which occur discordantly. But even though we are not able to find these, we ought not to throw away the true concept in relation to the gods (that they are the causes only of what is just); nor should we, because of controversy as to whether things occur and how they occur, reject notions in regard to the gods that are really clear. For it is much better to confess the feebleness of our powers that are unable to understand how unjust acts are perpetuated, than to concede an impossible falsehood in respect to the gods, concerning which all the Greek philosophers, and likewise the foreign peoples, rightly entertain the contrary opinion. So, then, this is the truth.

EVIL DAEMONS AT THE INITIATIONS

Nevertheless, it is necessary to add also the causes by which evils sometimes come into existence, and likewise how numerous and of what kind they are. For their form is not simple, ⁴ and being diversified it takes the lead in the bringing of a variety of evils into existence. For if we spoke truly just now in regard to the mystic figures and the evil daemons, that after the manner of actors in a play assume to be present in the character of gods and good daemons, there appears in some manner a malignant tribe rushing in a numerous body, and with these the discrepancy which thou hast described usually happens. For the daemons require the worshiper to be just, because they themselves as actors in the drama are assuming to be, as if of the race of the gods, whereas they are servants to injustice because they are in their nature evil.

Let there be, therefore, the same statement in regard to false and true, and of good and

evil. In the divinations we attribute truth to the gods only, and when falsehood is detected impute it to another race as the cause, that of the daemons. So also in regard to matters just and unjust; that what is beautiful and right is to be ascribed only to the gods and good daemons, while the daemons who are evil by nature do the things that are unjust and dishonorable. That which is in all respects in harmony with itself, and is always in the same manner in itself and with itself, pertains to the superior beings; but that which is contradictory, discordant and never the same, is the peculiarity of the dissensions of the daemons. Hence it is no matter of wonder in regard to them if violent conflicts exist. Indeed, it would be more wonderful if this should not be the case.

COOPERATION OF PARTS IN THE UNIVERSE

Hurrying out from another line of argument, we assume that the several parts of the body of the universe are not inert or destitute of power. On the contrary, so far as they excel our conditions in perfection, beauty and magnitude by so much we insist that the greater power is present with them. They are themselves capable of different things individually by themselves, and they employ diverse energies; but they can accomplish much more in a certain degree acting with one another. Indeed, there is a certain creative activity of various kinds extending from the whole universe into the parts either from sympathy through similarity of powers, or from the adaptation of the active to the passive principle.

If, therefore, there happen by corporeal necessities, any mischievous and destructive results to parts, yet they are salutary and beneficial as regards the whole and the entire framework. But they bring on a necessary decay to the parts, either from not being able to conduct the operations of the whole; or secondly, from a commingling and combining of the infirmities existing from themselves; or thirdly, from the want of harmony of the parts with one another.

MANY THINGS ORIGINATE SPONTANEOUSLY

Next in course after the body of the Universe, there are many things coming into existence from its productive principle. ⁵ For the harmonious union of the things that are of like nature, and the repulsion of those that are unlike, produce not a few. Moreover, the joining of the many is one, the Living Principle of the Universe, ⁶ and the forces in the world, however many and of whatever kind they may be, bring to perfection, to speak in plain terms, one thing in respect to the whole, but another in respect to the parts, owing to the relative feebleness of the parts when they are separate; just as Attraction, Love, and Repulsion, ⁷ which are present in the universe as energy, become passive conditions in those that participate individually, taking the lead in ideals and pure principles in the nature of wholes, ⁸ they share in a certain deficiency and unshapeliness which are incident to matter in regard to things of a divisible quality. In respect to wholes, they are united, but in regard to parts they are at variance. Thus do differentiated natures that participate in these imperfections in conjunction with matter deteriorate in regard to everything that is good, perfect and universal. Sometimes they decay in parts in order that the entire natures which are compacted firmly together may be preserved. Sometimes, also, the

parts are tormented and weighed down, while the natures that are entire remain insensible to such molestation.

DIVINITY NOT THE AUTHOR OF WRONG

Let us, therefore, bring together the results from these conclusions. For if some of those who make the invocations (at the Rites) employ the natural or corporeal powers of the universe, the gift comes of energy unpremeditated and without evil. Indeed, it is the one using the gift improperly who diverts it to contrary and useless purposes; and then it is joined in a contrary manner sympathetically to passive conditions through similarity of nature, but he draws the gift directly contrary to the right toward what is evil and base. He also makes the things that are farthest apart to operate together according to the one established order of the world. Yet if any one, perceiving this, should endeavor improperly to attract certain parts of the universe to other parts, they will not be the cause of that mischief; but, on the contrary, it will be the temerity of human beings, and the violation of order in the world, that pervert the things that are good and lawful.

Hence, therefore, the things that are considered to be wicked the gods do not perform, but, on the contrary, the natures that are beneath them are the causes of them, and likewise the bodies. Nor do these, as is supposed, impart from themselves anything of a faulty character; but they send down instead, for the safety of all, their own auras to those races that are allotted to the earth, ⁹ and those who receive these emanations change them by their own commingling and modifying and transfer what had been given for one purpose to others widely different.

From all these things, therefore, it is shown that the divinity is in no sense a source of evils and wrongs.

CONTINENCE

Moreover, thou askest, and at the same time hintest a doubt with this question: "They (the gods) will not hearken to the person who is invoking them, if he is not pure from sexual contamination. Yet they do not themselves hesitate to lead chance individuals into unlawful sexual relations."

Whether there are occurrences that take place outside of human laws, but according to another and higher source and order than the laws; or whether occurrences of this kind happen, and according to an agreement and affection in the world, but yet in part through some commingling sympathy; or whether the gift of beauty which was graciously imparted is perverted by those who receive it to that which is the opposite, there is, nevertheless, a clear solution from the things that have been said before.

SOURCES OF INCONTINENCE

Of a truth it is not necessary to examine separately in regard to these same things and how they occur and what reason there is for them. We must bear in mind that "the whole universe is a single living being," and the parts in it are separated by spaces, but

with one nature, and are desirous to be with one another. ¹⁰ The whole impulse for coming together and the cause of commingling attract the parts spontaneously to an intimate union. It is also possible, however, for this to be excited by artificial means, and likewise to be increased beyond what is becoming.

The cause itself, therefore, considered by itself alone, extending from itself about the whole world, is both good and a source of completeness, and also of communion, conjunction and harmonious adaptation and with the union it also introduces the indissoluble principle of Love which retains and preserves both the things that are and the things that come into existence. But in the parts (the incomplete natures) it occurs that by reason of their separateness from each other and from the perfect natures, and likewise because they are incomplete, deficient and weak in their own nature, there is a connection effected through the passive condition. On this account there are innate desire and appetite inherent in the principal number of them.

In Art, therefore, observing that this innate desire is thus implanted by Nature and distributed through her domain, and being itself distributed over the realm of nature in many forms, attracts it and leads it on. That which in itself is arranged in order, it brings into disorder, and that which is beautiful it fills with ideals of corresponding disfigurement. The Sacred Purpose in them all which is by nature that on union it changes to an unseemly complement of a different character, a bringing together of diverse things in some way according to a common passive condition. It likewise gives forth a material from itself which is adverse to the entire creation of what is beautiful, either not receiving beauty at all, or changing it to something else. It likewise mingles with many different forces of the realm of nature, from which it directs as it pleases the comminglings incident to the sphere of creation. ¹¹

We show, therefore, from every side that such argument for sexual connections comes from a technique or art of human origin, but is never from any necessity daemonian or divine.

INCONTINENCE PROMPTED FROM EVIL DAEMONS

Consider, therefore, a class of causes of a different kind: that somehow a stone or plant has frequently a destroying quality derived from them, or one that collects together those which are productive. For it is not by any means in respect to these things alone, but also in respect to greater natures or in greater things that this natural superiority exists, which they who are unable to examine, reflect upon and determine, may easily attribute to the superior operations of nature. Already, moreover, it may be conceded that in the realm of generated existence, in respect to human affairs and in matters generally about the earth, the tribe of evil daemons is able to hold superior dominion. What wonder is it, then, if such a race performs such works? For every man may not be able to discriminate which is the good and which the evil selfhood, or by what tokens they may be distinguished from one another. Indeed, those who are not able to perceive the distinction come to conclusions absurdly concerning the inquiry in regard to the cause of these agencies and refer it to the races superior to the realm of nature and to the order of daemons. But even though powers of the partied ¹² soul are

comprehended in respect to these things as to their accomplishment, both while it holds to the body and when it has left the oyster-like and earthly corporeality, ¹³ but yet wanders below around the places of creation in a disturbed and melting spirit – nevertheless the same opinion would be true; but it places the cause far away from the superior beings. By no means, therefore, does the divine nature nor a good daemon minister to the unlawful desires of human beings in regard to sexual matters, since there are many other causes of these.

Notes:

1. Proklos enumerates three classes of the daemons: the more spiritual, the more rational, and the more unreasoning. The guides of Sokrates and Plotinus were of the second of these. They are here described.

2. Charoneia is a district in Asia Minor, bordering on the river Meander. The name is from Charon, the supposed ferryman of disembodied souls across the river Styx in the Underworld. The caves, or, rather, little openings in the ground, emitted a sulfurous vapor, sometimes destructive to life. Pliny also mentions similar cavities at Italy, near Puteoli. They were supposed to lead to the realm of Hades.

3. These irrational spirits, so far as they contribute to perfecting individuals, are superior to us, though because of their irrationality they are inferior.

4. Real being, only is simple and unique: evil is always complex.

5. The fisis (physis), or nature, is here indicated as the maternal function of the world, by which the multiplicity of created things are brought forth into existence.

6. The Anima Mundi, or Soul of the world.

7. Greek, filia, efws, neikos. The ancient verse repeated this statement as follows:

“The race of Immortals was not till Eros mingled all together:

But when the elements were mixed with one another,

Heaven was produced, the ocean and earth and the imperishable race of the blessed gods.”

8. “Wholes” being complete are undivided into parts, but complete in every respect.

9. The “archons” of the lower earthly class.

10. Plotinus: Ennead IV, iv, 32 “This all is one and as a single living being. Being a living being and completely one, there is nothing in it so distant in space as not to be near to the peculiar nature of the one living being through common sympathy.”

11. “The Magic Art (white magic) is regarded by the Greeks as an agency of great power. They declare it to be actually the very extreme of the Sacred Knowledge. For it searches out everything under the moon, its nature, virtue and quality: I mean the elements and their component parts, being animals, plants of all kinds and their fruits, stones, and herbs: and in short, everything with its substance and power. Hence, therefore, it works out results of itself: it employs schemes of every kind, images promotive of health.”

12. The human soul is particled, divided not only by qualities but also by being partly included in the category and influence of the body while the nobler part is still in a

manner a denizen of the Eternal Region. Hence the declaration of Paul to the Corinthian believers “We know that though our earthly house of this tabernacle should be dissolved, we have a divine building, a house not made by hands, eternal in the heavens.”

13. Plato: Phaedros – “This which we now carry with us and call 'the body,' fastened to it like an oyster to its shell.”

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Part V. Sacrifices and prayers

Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

The subject, therefore, concerning which thou makest thy next enquiry, is a common theme of discussion with everybody, both those who are proficient in the sacred learning and those less skilled in such matters are speaking in regard to Sacrifices: "What utility or power they possess in the world and with the gods, and for what reason they are performed appropriate for the beings thus honored, and advantageously for the persons who present the gifts."

There is also added in the same connection another opposing remark: "The gods also require that interpreters of the oracles observe strict abstinence from animal substances, in order that they may not be made impure by the fumes from the bodies, yet they themselves are allured most of all by the fumes of the sacrifices of animals."

NO ACTUAL CONFLICT AS SUGGESTED

It is easy enough, therefore, for any one to dispose of the conflict which thou suggestest. He has simply to point out the excellence of wholes as compared to the incomplete natures and to call attention to the absolute superiority of the gods to human beings. What I now affirm is the following theorem: That for the Universal Soul to preside over the world-body of the Universe and for the gods of the sky to take the celestial body (or sphere) for a vehicle, is neither injurious as a receptacle of passions nor an impediment to the conceptions of mind, but that for the imperfect soul to be in partnership with a body is unprofitable in both these respects. ¹ Suppose, then, this being perceived, some difficult problem is suggested, like this, for example: That if the body is a fetter to our soul, it will also be a fetter to the soul of the universe; and if the imperfect soul is turned to the body with reference to generation, so also the world-soul will be affected in like manner. Any one may reply to this by declaring that such an objection does not regard the superiority of the higher races to human beings and of the wholes to parts. As, therefore, the converse propositions relate to matters diverse from each other, they do not in any way constitute matters for dispute.

IN REGARD TO SACRIFICED ANIMALS

Here, therefore, the same reasoning is enough. With us the enjoyment incident to bodies conjoined with the soul imparts dullness of mind and actual defilement, and likewise engenders voluptuousness and produces many different maladies of the soul. ² In the case, however, of the gods, and of the creators (causes) of the universe and all things, however, the exhalation from the victims going up in a manner proper in religious rites, and likewise encompassed and not encompassing, and itself joined to the all, but in no sense joining the universe and the gods with itself, is itself. adapted to the superior races and the universal causes, but never restrains them or adapts them to itself.

DIVINITIES OF THE SKY NOT AFFECTED BY EXHALATIONS

For if the matter is rightly understood, there is by no means any difficulty like that which suggests itself to thee and about which thou contendest in relation to Abstinence from Animal Food. For they who conduct the worship of the gods do not abstain from animal food in order that the gods may not be defiled by the fumes from the animals. For what exhalation from the bodies will come near the beings who, before anything material reaches them by any possibility, put matter away from touching them? Not because their power removes everything that causes the bodies to disappear without coming near them; but on the contrary the celestial body (the planet) is unmingled with all material constituents. ³ It does not receive anything into itself from without, and it does not give forth any particle from itself to things foreign to it. How, then, can any earthly vapor which does not rise five stadia (six hundred feet) from the earth, before it sinks down to it again, come near the sky, or nourish the revolving and non-material body, or, in short, produce in it any defilement or other condition? For it is acknowledged that the ætherial etherial body is outside of every contrary influence, and likewise that it is free from all change; that it is entirely pure from every possibility of being transformed into something else, and, besides this, is utterly without any impulse toward the center or from the center. Hence it is stationary in one place, or it revolves in an orbit. There is not, therefore, any common nature, or power, or exhalation of the bodies which consist of different forces and motions, that are variously modified, moving upward or downward, which may become mingled with the bodies in the sky. Because, therefore, these essences are entirely separate and diverse from them, they effect nothing in regard to them. These, being unbegotten, cannot undergo any change in themselves from those that are generated and subject to change. How, then, may the essence of the divine beings be defiled from such fumes when, as we may say, they put quickly away at a single impulse the vapors from all matter and bodies composed of matter?

It is not proper, therefore, to conjecture this; but rather to reflect that things which are distributed into parts can have a certain relation to each other, actively or passively, the material to the non-material, and, in short, like natures to like natures. Those, however, that are of another essence, and such as are entirely superior, and which likewise are endowed with other natures and faculties, are not capable of such things as acting upon others or receiving anything from others. The defilement proceeds, therefore, from material objects to those that are held by a material body. It is necessary, accordingly,

for those to be purified from these things who are likely to be contaminated from matter. They, however, who are completely free from a divisible nature, who are entirely without the power of receiving conditions from matter into themselves, how can they become contaminated by material things? How can the divine nature, which is preexistent and superior to human infirmity, and has nothing in common with us, be affected from my emotions or those of any other human being?

Neither of these, accordingly, makes any difference to the gods. No matter is it that we are endowed with bodies from the sphere of matter, for there is nothing, in short, of this with them; and, as they are entirely pure and unmingled essences, they are not deified from our stains, nor is it of any consequence if material exhalations of bodies are given off around the earth, for these are the farthest remote from their essence and powers. Hence if there exists no part of it in respect to the gods, the whole hypothesis of contrariety (which has been put forth) is completely destroyed. For how may that which is absolutely non-existent (without an external substance) have any conflict in itself? By vainly conjecturing such things, so absurd and unworthy of gods, thou bringest up questions which may not reasonably be adduced in respect to good men. For no man possessing intelligence and undisturbed by passion – much less one of the superior races-would ever be allured by the exhalations of vapors from a sacrifice.

These things, however, will be made the topic of discourse a little later. But for the present the notion of contrariety of nature, having been controverted by many refutations, we will leave off reasoning in respect to the first topic of discussion.

CONCERNING THE SACRIFICES

But the question is more important, and relates to things of greater consequence. How will I be able to answer thee briefly and fully what is difficult and requires a long explanation? I will attempt to reply, nevertheless, and will not be backward in zeal for promptness. I will also endeavor to follow the points which thou hast concisely indicated and go onward to some of special significance.

I will accordingly set forth to thee, so far as I may, the dogma Concerning Sacrifices; that it is by no means to offer them for the sake of honor along in the same way that we honor benefactors; nor for the sake of grateful acknowledging of benefits which the gods have bestowed upon us; nor yet as a first-fruit or gift by way of recompense for older gifts which the gods have made to us. For these are things common also to mankind, and are likewise received from the common administration; but they by no means establish beyond question the supremacy of the gods and their rank as specific causes.

EFFICACY OF SACRIFICES ON SACRED RITES

That, however, which is of the greatest importance should now be considered. I mean, the efficacy of the Sacrifices, why they effect so much. But for them there would come neither cessations from pestilence, nor from famines, nor from unproductive seasons; neither would there be showers of rain, nor the things which are more precious than

these, such as conduce to purification of the soul, or to perfection, ⁴ or to liberation from the conditions of generated existence. Indeed, such modes of sacrificing do not exhibit these results at all. Hence, therefore, as they do not set forth properly in these rites the divine cause of the performances, we cannot justly approve of them. But if they are to be approved at all, it will be only after a secondary manner and as being dependent upon the primary and most ancient divine causes.

THE DIVINITIES SUPERIOR TO THE REALM OF NATURE

The matter under consideration requires, therefore, that we shall set forth the principle according to which the sacrifices are adapted to the events, and have relation to the gods that are the causes precedent to the things that take place. Suppose, then, we may say that by having one life everywhere, the same in the whole universe as in a single living being, there is a participation of similar forces, or a repulsion of opposing ones, or a certain affinity of the active to the passive, which moves the things that are similar and in affinity at the same time, operating in them in like manner by one common sympathy and existing in the most distant as in the nearest. There is then something thus stated of things that are true, and that of necessity belong with the sacrifices. Yet the true purpose of the sacrifices is not thereby shown. For the essence of the gods is in no way dependent upon the realm of nature and upon natural necessities, so as to be aroused by natural passions or by the forces which extend through all the realm of nature. On the other hand it is established by itself outside of these, having nothing in common with them-neither according to essence, nor according to power, nor according to any other thing whatever.

Notes:

1. Stobaeos has preserved the following fragment by Iamblichos, setting forth the same concept: "All souls do not have the same common relation to bodies, but the Universal Soul, as it seemed to Plotinus, issues forth by itself and comprises the body in itself, but it does not couple with the body nor is it encompassed by it. Imperfect souls (such as human beings are endowed with), however, come to the bodies and are born with them."

2. Androkydes, the Pythagorean, says: "Wine and the enjoyments of flesh make the body vigorous, but the soul more sluggish."

3. Proklos describes a celestial body or planet as containing the highest principles of the elements and as characterized by vivific unburning fire; in other words, a vitalized principle extended.

4. The Magians and Theurgic priests entertained the notion that it was not in reason for the soul to be made pure by corporeal sacrifices, but Porphyry is said to have conceded that the inferior part of the soul, the "mortal soul," might be thereby purified to a certain degree, though not sufficiently for it to attain immortality. The "teleôsis" here spoken of was understood by Proklos to consist in the union of the soul to the Divine Father, by means of the "perfective rite" or initiation: but Porphyry affirmed, as Augustine declared, that those who were thus purified, did not return to the Father or

Supreme Divinity, but dwelt above the aerial region among the gods of the æther.

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The same absurdities occur, however, if any of these things are considered as causes of what is effected at the Sacred Rites, namely: Certain numbers that are still regarded among us, as in regard to the crocodile, sixty as akin to the Sun; ¹ or terms expressive of natural objects, as the powers and energies of animals, such as the dog, the baboon, the field-mouse, which are assigned to the Moon, ² or material forms, such as are beheld in the sacred animals, according to the colors and shapes of the body; ³ or some other of the animals in relation to their bodies, or whatever else may be brought into notice; or an organ, like the heart of the cock, ⁴ or other things of similar character, which are regarded in respect to the world of nature as causes of successful results in the Sacrifices. For not one of the gods is shown from these things to be the cause beyond the realm of nature; nor is he as such set in activity by the sacrifices. But as a natural cause held fast by matter and physically encompassed by the bodies it is aroused by them, and put to rest again. Indeed, these things are essentials in the region of nature. If, then, anything of such a character is at the Sacred Rites, it accompanies them as a joint cause and as having the consideration of being indispensable, and in this way it is allied to the anterior causes.

THREE GRADES OF ARCHETYPES

It is better, therefore, to assign as the cause of efficacy an attraction and affinity, and likewise an interrelation such as allies workmen to the things which they have wrought and parents to offspring. When, therefore, this common principle being the anterior cause, we take some animal or thing growing upon the earth that has preserved the purpose of the Creator intact and pure, then through such an object, we deal familiarly with the Demiurgic Cause which is over it unmingled with anything else.

These causes (or categories), however, are numerous. Some of them, as, for example, the daemonian, are closely joined together; and others, for instance the divine, are ranked after a manner higher than these; and then still beyond there is their Leader, the One Most Ancient Cause. All the categories act together at the perfect Sacrifice. ⁵ Every one is adapted to it generally according to the rank which is

possessed.

If, however, any sacrifice chances to be defective, it goes forward to a certain extent, but it is not possible to go still further. Hence many think that sacrifices are to be presented to the beneficent daemons; many to the final powers of the gods; and many to the pericosmian or to the terrestrial ⁶ powers of daemons or of divinities. These things, being a part in regard to the sacrifices, are not told guilefully, but they by no means afford us a view of the whole of the virtue of the rite and all the benefits and the divineness which extends through all.

DAEMONS AND NOT GODS INFLUENCED BY SACRIFICES

We admit, then, all these statements. ⁷ We say .that the beings that belong to the realm of nature act in concert together according to convenience, or sympathy, or antipathy; and in other respects are subject and follow and are subservient to the superior being, and cause of the efficacy of sacrifices. But the daemons, and also the terrestrial and pericosmian powers as being principals, are associated together according to rank as is the case with us. Nevertheless, the most effective highest-ranking of the causes of efficacy in the sacrifices are united with the Demiurgic and absolutely perfect powers.

But since these comprehend themselves all the causes, however many they are, we affirm that all the active operators are moved together with these causes at the same moment; and that from them all there descends a common beneficial influence into the whole realm of generated existence. Sometimes this help is imparted according to cities and districts, or to various nations, or to greater or smaller divisions of these. At other times, the benefits are given with an ungrudging willingness to households, or to every individual, and the distribution of them is made freely and without feeling; and with an unimpassioned mind according to relationship and affiliation, as it is right and proper to give; one affection meanwhile holding all together and forming this bond through an unutterable communion.

These things are much more true, and happen to be more correct in relation to the essence and power of the gods, than what thou dost conjecture, namely: "that they themselves are allured most of all by the fumes of the sacrifices of animals." For if there is in any sense a body to the daemons which some imagine to be nourished from the sacrifices, this body must be unchangeable and impassive, and likewise luminous and in want of nothing. Hence there is neither need for anything to flow from it nor of an inflow from without. If, however, any one remains still of opinion that this is the case, yet the world and the atmosphere in it have an incessant exhalation from the region about the earth. What need, then, have they of the sacrifices? ⁸

On the other hand, the substances which are thus received do not supply to an equivalent amount in proportion to the deficiency created by what has been cast forth, so that neither an excess may predominate nor a deficiency occur, but that there shall exist in like manner in every way, equality and a uniform condition of the bodies of the daemons. For the Creator (Demiurgos) does not by any means set food abundant and

in reach for all living things in the earth and sea, but has implanted want of the same in the races superior to us. Nor has he furnished to the other living things a natural abundance of the necessities of life. But to the daemons he gives food of a quality adapted to their nature, which is contributed by us human beings. Hence, if we, through laziness or some other pretext, as is likely, should neglect such contributions, the bodies of the daemons will be in want of food, and will experience both privation and disorder. ⁹

Why, then, do not they who make these assertions overturn the whole order of things so as to establish us in a better and more powerful arrangement? For if they make us agents to supply nourishment to the daemons, we shall be of a category superior to the daemons. For every thing receives food and what it requires from the source by which it came into existence. This may be seen in the visible world of created beings, and it is also perceivable in the universal order. For they who are living upon the earth are nourished from the celestial regions. But it becomes more distinctly manifest with the invisible causes. For soul is sustained from mind, and physical nature from soul; and other things are also nourished in like manner from their originators.

If, then, it is impossible for us to be the ones who brought the daemons into existence, by the same reasoning it is demonstrated that we are not the sources from which they derive their support.

HOW SACRIFICES ARE BENEFICIAL

It seems to me, moreover, that the question now being considered goes astray in another particular. For it ignores the bringing of the sacrifices through fire, as it is rather a consuming and destroying of the matter of which they consist, and likewise an assimilating of it to itself, while in no sense does it become itself assimilated to the matter. It is also a bringing upward to the divine, celestial and non-material fire, but by no means a moving downward to the region of matter and generated existence. For if the enjoying of the fumes of matter in the sacrifices “allured” the Superior races, it is proper that the matter shall be pure from contamination, for in this way there will be a greater exhalation from it to those that partake. Now, however, all is burned and utterly consumed, and is changed into the pure and tenuous substance of fire, which is itself clear proof to the contrary to what thou affirmest. For the superior races are impassive and it is a delight to them to extirpate the matter by means of the fire and to render us impassive. The characteristics in us become like the gods in the same manner as fire transforms all hard and refractory materials to luminant and tenuous bodies. ¹⁰ They likewise lead us upward, by the sacrifices and sacrificial fire to the fire of the gods in the same way that fire rises to fire, by leading and drawing upward those qualities which drag downward and are opposed to the divine and celestial essences.

SACRIFICIAL FIRE A PURIFIER

To speak without disguise, it is neither from the matter of which the sacrifices consist, nor from the elements, nor from any other of the bodies known to us, that the daemons

have the vehicle serving as bodies and resembling them. ¹¹ What fruition, then, can ever take place from an essence of one kind to a different one, or what enjoyment can be imparted by alien natures to those that are alien to them? There is none, but rather it is far the other way. As the gods cut the matter away with the electric fire and separate from it whatever things are non-material in their essence, but yet are held firmly and fettered by it, and as they likewise evolve impassive natures from the impassible – so also the fire that is with us, imitating the operation of the divine fire, destroys everything in the sacrifices that is constituted of matter. It purifies the things that are brought to the fire, releases them from their bonds in matter, and likewise renders them, through its purity of nature, fit for the commonalty of gods. It also, through these changes, releases us from the bonds of generated existence, makes us like the gods, and likewise renders us fit for their friendship, and our material nature near to the non-material essence. ¹²

THE TRUE CONCEPTS

Having thus refuted the absurd opinions generally in regard to Sacred Rites, we will introduce in their place the true conceptions. As it belongs to another subject, we omit the explanation in detail in respect to each form of sacrifices which the peculiar reason in respect to the rites requires. Nevertheless, any person who is well endowed will be able, from what has been said, to extend his understanding from one subject to many, and cognize quickly from these the things which have been passed over in silence. I think, therefore, that these things have been sufficiently explained, in their different aspects, and because our explanation sets forth becomingly the pure essence and quality of the divine beings. This, however, may appear equally incredible and by no means clear, and likewise suspicious as not setting the reasoning faculty at work, but not extending to the discourses upon the Soul. I mean, therefore, to go over these things a little more fully, and likewise, if possible, to bring forward proofs more conclusive than those which have been already examined.

TWO ORDERS OF DIVINITIES

The best introduction of all shows plainly the institution of Sacred Rites as it relates to the ranking of the gods. At the outset, therefore, we may lay down that some of the gods belong to the realm of matter and others are beyond it; those of the sphere of matter encompassing the matter in them-selves, and organizing it, and the non-material divinities being entirely separate from matter and superior to it. ¹³ In the Sacerdotal Technic, it is necessary for the Sacred Rites to be begun from the divinities belonging to the realm of matter, for otherwise there would be no going upward to the gods who are aloof from matter. They have therefore a communion with the sphere of matter in so far as they are placed over it. Hence they have control of those affairs which are permitted in relation to the sphere of matter; as, for example, classification, active effort, repulsion, change, the generation and decay of all material bodies.

Suppose, then, any one should wish to worship divinities of this class according to Theurgic Rites, in a manner proper to them and as originally allotted. In such case, as they are of the realm of matter, the attention ought to be given to a form of service

appropriate to that realm. For in this way we will be led wholly into familiar intimacy with them all, and will bring to them in worship what is appropriate to a kindred race. Hence dead bodies and creatures deprived of life, and likewise the slaughter of animals and consuming of the bodies, ¹⁴ and also the manifold change, decay and vicissitude generally which befall to matter pertain to the gods; not to them through themselves, but through the realm of matter over which they are rulers. For although they are to the utmost separated from it they are nevertheless present with it; and although they encompass it by a power which is not of matter, they exist along with it. The things that are thus conducted are not alien to those who conduct them, nor are those that are put in order foreign to those who put them in order, and those likewise that are subservient are not unadapted to those that make use of them as instruments.

Hence the offering of anything belonging to the realm of matter is alien and repugnant to the divinities of the supramaterial world, but it is perfectly proper for all those that are allied to matter. ¹⁵

TWO KINDS OF SACRED RITES

Let us next consider what is in harmony with the sentiments which have been uttered, and with our twofold constitution. For when we become entirely soul and are outside of the body, and soaring on high with all the gods of the non-material realm, we occupy ourselves with sublime visions. Then again, we are bound in the oyster-like body and held fast under the dominion of matter, and are corporeal in feeling and aspiration. ¹⁶ There comes, accordingly, therefore, a twofold form of worship. For the one which is for unstained souls will be simple, free of the body and pure from every condition of generated existence; but the other, which is accommodated to souls that are not pure and liberated from the conditions of generated existence, is filled with corporeal things and everything that relates to the world of matter. ¹⁷

I admit therefore that there are two forms of Sacred Rites. The one, those for individuals who are entirely purified. Such rarely happen, as Herakleitos affirms, beyond a single person at one time or a few that may be easily counted. The other class, such as are yet held by the body, consists of those who are of the realm of matter and of corporeal quality, sustaining themselves through change. ¹⁸

Hence, unless such a form of worship shall be instituted for cities and peoples that are not relieved from the hereditary allotment, ¹⁹ and that hold tenaciously to the communion with the body, they will fail utterly of both kinds of good, that which is superior to the realm of matter, and that which is of the world of matter. For the former they are unable to receive, and to the latter they bring nothing of kindred nature. At the same time every one performs his service according to what he is, and certainly not with reference to what he is not. For it is not proper for it to exceed the worshipers' own condition. I have the same thing to say also in respect to the intimate union which joins together the men who are worshipping and the powers that are worshipped as members of a family. For I desire the same unity, that the usage of religious worship which is homogeneous with it shall be chosen, namely: not only that which is non-material being commingled in the manner accordant with itself, and joining the incorporeal natures in a

pure manner with themselves, with pure incorporeal powers, but also uniting the corporeal natures after a corporeal manner with corporeal essences, commingling with the bodies the superior essences that pervade them.

WHY WORSHIP IS OF A SENSUOUS CHARACTER

We shall not, therefore, think it unworthy of us to treat also of matters of such a lower character. Thus in respect of the needs of the body, we often perform some office to the guardians of the corporeal nature, the gods and good daemons; such as purifying it from old stains, or freeing it of diseases, and making it abound with health, or taking away from it heaviness and torpor, and imparting to it lightness and activity instead – or if nothing else, procuring for it all manner of benefits. We do not, therefore, in any way treat it as though it was of mental quality or even as though it was not corporeal. For the body is not constituted to participate in such modes of proceeding. But when it participates in modes of a nature corresponding to itself, a body is healed and purified by bodies. From necessity of such a kind, therefore, the institution of Sacred Rites will be of a corporeal ideal; on the one hand pruning away what is superfluous in us, and on the other supplying whatever in us is wanting, and also bringing into order and proportion in so far as it is disordered. We often make use of sacred ceremonies, beseeching from the superior races that they do for us many things of importance to the human life. These, doubtless, are the beings that take care of the body, or have charge of those things which we procure for the sake of our bodies. ²⁰

SENSUOUS WORSHIP FURTHER JUSTIFIED

What, then, it may be asked, will there be for us from the gods who are entirely exempt from all human conditioned existence in respect to unfruitfulness of the soil, or abundance, or other concern of life? Nothing whatever; for it is not the province of those beings who are free of all such things to touch gifts of this kind.

But suppose it is affirmed that the divinities who are entirely beyond the realm of matter encompass those of the other class, and when they encompass them, they also include their gifts in themselves, as being the One First Cause. ²¹

It may also be asserted that abundance of the divine bounty comes down from them. But it must be allowed to no one to say that these superior divinities who perform these things come in close contact with the affairs of human life. For such an administration of things here is capable of division into departments, and is exercised with a certain degree of care; it is likewise by no means wholly separate from bodies, and it cannot be endowed with authority entirely untarnished. Does not the mode of religious worship best suit the case in performance of this kind, which is mingled with corporeal matters and allied to generated existence; and not that which is wholly apart from the realm of matter and from concerns of the body? For the mode that is thus pure is absolutely above us, and is wholly unsuitable; but the one that makes use of bodies and of the powers that operate by means of bodies is, in the completest sense of all, especially allied to us. It can not only effect successes in life, but it can also avert imminent misfortunes, and bring harmony and a just tempering of conditions to the mortal race.

THE THREE CLASSES

According to another classification, the numerous throng of human beings is arranged under the head of "Nature." It is governed by the powers of the realm of Nature, looks down to the operations of Nature, and likewise in addition makes complete the jurisdiction of Fate, submits to the order of things to be accomplished in so far as it is fated, and also employs practical reasoning in regard to things that belong alone to the department of nature.

A certain few, however, who exercise a faculty of mind superior to nature, are exalted beyond that class and ranked in the order of separate and unalloyed intelligence as being those who have become altogether superior to the powers of the realm of nature.

Others, however, are placed between these as intermediaries between the department of nature and that of pure intelligence; some following after both classes, others pursuing a life commingled from the two, and others being set free from the inferior classes and placed with the more excellent. ²²

These, then, having been thus defined, that which is to accompany them becomes especially plain. For they who are governed by the general condition of things, and they in particular who live according to their own peculiar natural disposition and make use of their natural powers, adopt the religious worship that is proper to nature and to bodies made active by nature; ²³ making choice of places, atmosphere, matter and powers of matter, bodies and habitudes of bodies, qualities, appropriate dances, changes incident to generated existence, and other things congruous with these, in other departments of religious worship, and in the department which is directly connected with sacrificing.

But they who live with reference to mind alone, and the life which is of the mind, and who are free of the bonds of the realm of nature, exercise diligently in the spiritual and incorporeal law of the Sacred Art relating to the several departments of Theurgy.

Those who are intermediary between the two classes, pursue assiduously the ways of holiness in different manner, according to the differences between them, either participating in both these modes of religious devotion, or standing aloof from one of them, or accepting them as a foundation of things more valuable. For without these they may never accomplish the higher attainments. In some other way perhaps they may take them in hand in a becoming manner.

THREE CLASSES OF DIVINITIES

In respect, however, to this very mode of distinction, there is brought to our attention the following classification of the divine Essences and powers:

Some have a soul and nature subject and subservient to their creations, in whatever way they will.

Others are entirely separate from soul and nature. I mean from the divine soul and nature and not from the cosmic and genetic soul and nature only.

Some, however, are intermediaries between them, and preserve a communion from each to each other; either by an unsevered bond of union, or by a generous imparting of superior benefits or an unchecked reception of lesser ones, or by the harmony of mind which binds both together. ²⁴

When, therefore, we are worshipping the gods that are kings of the realms of soul and nature, it is not out of the way to present to them natural powers and bodies that are not controlled by nature, devoting to them what is not worthless. For all the operations of nature are subservient to them and associated with them in the administration of the world.

But when we are paying homage to these gods that are uniform in respect to themselves, it is proper to distinguish them with unlimited honors. Gifts of a spiritual character are suited to them, things of the incorporeal life, and likewise such as virtue and wisdom bestow, and whatever good things of the soul are perfect and entire.

And moreover, to the intermediary divinities, those who lead in benefits of the middle class, sometimes gifts of a twofold character will be suitable, and sometimes those common to both the classes, or those which are separate from the lower orders but belong to the higher; or to sum up the whole matter, those Which will in one of the modes be amply sufficient for the intermediate.

THE EXALTED CONDITION NOT COMMON TO ALL

Setting out from another original principle: that of the world and the cosmian divinities, and likewise the distribution of the four elements in the world, the apportioning of the elements by allotment in due proportion, and their circling revolution in orderly arrangement in respect to centers, we have an easy path to the true conception of the holy rites in respect to sacrifices. Suppose we ourselves are in the world, and are included as parts in the whole universe, that we are likewise produced by it at first and brought to maturity by all the forces in it, and also that we are constituted from the elements in it, and receive from it a certain allotment of life and nature. We may not, on account of these things, pass over the world and the cosmian arrangements. We must grant accordingly that in every region about the world there is this body which we observe, and there are also the incorporeal classified powers around the bodies. Hence the law of religion, it is plain, assigns like things to like and extends in this manner through the universal spaces from on high to the last, assigning things incorporeal to the incorporeal, and things corporeal to the corporeal, each giving to the other in due accord with their peculiar nature.

But when one of the theurgists becomes participant with the supernal gods – which is the rarest occurrence of any – that individual, he, from whatever corner he may come, being united to the gods by a supernal power, is superior to corporeal things and the realm of matter, as respects the worship of the gods. This sublime attainment is made by a person with difficulty and at a late period at the end of the sacred experience. It is

not proper, therefore, to set it forth as a matter common to everybody; and in particular it should not be made common to those who are beginners in the theurgic discipline, nor to those who are midway in it; for these, in some way or other, bestow attention upon sacred matters as if it were a matter of bodily concern. ²⁵

Notes:

1. The Pythagoreans, who are supposed to have adopted their principal philosophic notions from Egypt, attached special honor to certain numbers and geometric figures. Plutarch affirms that they designated these as divinities, calling the equilateral triangle Athena or Wisdom; the unit, Apollo, as denoting "not many" (a-pollôn); the duad or two, courage and conflict; the triad, justice; and the four, the universe; and also thirty-six as being the sum of the first four odd and the first four even numbers (36) The crocodile was described as producing sixty eggs and occupying sixty days in their hatching It was venerated anciently in the country of the Fayum in Middle Egypt, and was the Symbol of Ra, the Sun-God, and also of Osiris, as the Sun-God of Amenti, the region of the dead.

2. The goddess Isis, the sister and consort of Osiris, the Egyptian Bacchus, was sometimes considered to represent the Moon. When seeking for the body of her murdered husband, a dog was said to have accompanied her. A dog is also included in the Parsi ceremonies. Anubis, who was symbolized by the dog and the dog-headed baboon, was always commemorated in the Secret Rites. The male baboon is melancholy when the moon is hidden, and the female exhibits peculiarities common to women.

3. Sacred animals were numerous in Egypt, every nome or district having its own. The bulls Apis and Men were selected for their color and peculiarities of body. There were also the sacred bat, ram, cat, river-horse, wolf, serpent, hawk, ibis, etc. They were considered as representing qualities indicative of soul, emotion and moral sense, qualities produced by nature and Divinity. "We worship God through them," says Plutarch.

4. The cock was anciently venerated in many countries as sacred to the Sun and at the sacrifices it was customary for the divines to inspect his heart for auguries Porphyry has recorded similar facts in relation to the heart of the crow, the mole and the hawk. Indeed, every ancient people had its sacred bird. The eagle and the cock seem to have continued to modern time, and even with peoples where the primitive mystic purport is not known.

5. This appears to be a conceding that the Supreme Divinity is influenced by these sacrifices and similarly by the Magian Rites. This, however, many of the Platonists, as well as the Aristotelians, Stoics and Epicureans, strenuously denied.

6. The term "powers" is used by Abammon in the Aristotelian sense, denoting inherent faculties as prior to the exercise of force, and the producing of effects.

7. Our author here refers, as will be observed, to the declarations of Porphyry, which are quoted in the First Chapter, but are not found in the present text of the Letter to the Expounder Anebo. Porphyry had questioned the utility and actual effect of the sacrificial rites upon the general order of the universe and the purposes of the gods, and likewise whether they were performed in a proper manner as related to the gods, or really procured any advantage to the worshipers themselves.

8. It was held that these sacrifices to the daemons were more acceptable than exhalations from other things, because that in the fumes there were more vivid traces of the living soul, and so a greater relationship. Hence in invocations to the daemons and to the manes or shades of the dead, victims were immolated in order that a nourishing exhalation might be obtained from the flowing blood. See *Odyssey*, Book XI.

9. Plato, in the *Timaeus*, treats of junior divinities, whose bodies were derived from the elements, and were to be dissolved. Proklos also describes the gods of the cosmian universe as both of indissoluble nature and such as are to be dissolved. Plutarch and Hesiod describes daemons as a distant race from the gods, and as the inspirers of oracles, but as actually mortal. If they commit any fault they are thrust down to earth, fall into the sphere of generated existence, and are fastened to human bodies.

10. Marsilio Ficino, the Italian Platonist, remarks that the fire which is kindled by us is more like heaven than like what is left behind. It is made participant of light, which is a something incorporeal, the most powerful of all things, and as if alive, perpetually moving, dividing everything, yet not itself divisible, absorbing all things into itself, yet evading every alien mixture; and suddenly, when it is fully set free, flying back to the celestial fire which is latent everywhere.

11. The daemons may be described as having vehicles of a substance different from that of bodies, and accorded to the different orders. The daemons of the sky are described as having such vehicles composed not of elementary and natural principles, but those of the water and earth were so endowed, and to these the sacrifices were offered. The former were of the number not nourished from the fumes of the sacrifices, but the latter acquire growth from external sources. Yet as the vehicles were not derived from the elements, nor from bodies known to us, our author would have done a favor by telling whence they came. This, however, was no easy thing to do, if modern "materialization" of spiritual beings seems not to have been imagined. Plato, in the *Timaeus*, seems to regard the vehicle as self-created, or the production of the "junior gods."

12. Proklos remarks of the Perfective Discipline, "that, as the Oracles teach, it obliterates, through the divine fire, all the stains derived from generated existence." The *Chaldaean Oracle* also says: "The mortal drawing near the sacrificial fire will have light from Divinity."

13. Proklos, in the *Commentary upon the Alkibiades*, sets forth this classification, calling the divinities, the absolute and the cosmian gods. The *Chaldaean Oracles* denominate the latter, the Synoches or Associated divinities. Plato has also called them Lesser or Junior Gods. Other writers declare that these divinities, whose ministry is about the earth and human affairs, actually belong to the order of daemons. The gods of the Mystic Rites are accordingly so included.

14. Porphyry and others of the philosophers of that period declared distinctly that the sacrifices of living creatures were not for the gods at all, but for daemons and the lower orders of spiritual essences. Indeed, their sentiments were considered as evidence of a hostility to Judaism. In archaic times, and even in many centuries of the historical period, human victims were immolated, and the Hebrew writings seem to recognize the custom (*Leviticus* xxvii, 28, 29; *Judges* xi, 30-40; *Micah*, vi, 7). Plutarch denounced this practice, and declared his belief that there was never a god that required it, but it was only intended to avert and appease the malice and rancor of evil spirits. The slaughter of hogs at the festivals of Adonis, Osiris and Demeter seems to

have been of the latter character, as swine were abhorred in Oriental countries.

15. Here may be perceived the distinction between different teachers. One school adopted the notion that the body being constituted of matter, was to be macerated and held in low esteem. Plato, however, in *Theætetos*, taught that we escaped from evil in the body by becoming as much as possible like a god. This was to be accomplished by a life of purity and justice, not by bodily worship, but by mental and moral excellence.

16. This figure is borrowed from Plato, and we find it eloquently depicted in the *Phaedros*.

17. This twofold phase of religions customs, the religion of the right hand and that of the left, still exists with the worshiper of Shiva and the Shakti in India. It was exhibited in the Orphic and Dionysiac worships of Greece, and in several Oriental Rites. So the ascetic and the freer religionist were alike treated according to their respective dispositions.

18. In other words, holding to no stable purpose, and exhibiting some new energy at every new phase of opinion or experience.

19. They were considered as more or less infested by evil daemon whom it was necessary to placate.

20. In the Egyptian System the human body was apportioned into thirty-six regions, each of which was supposed to be in charge of its own over-lord or presiding divinity, and had its class of physicians at the different temples.

21. This including of the Superior divinities under the designation of One First Cause, will seem to imply that they were considered as substantially one godhead. The late Prof. Taylor Lewis, of Union College, so viewed the matter. It will be observed that in the Hebrew text of the Bible, the Supreme Being is often designated by a plural term: "The Lord (Yava) our Eloim (Gods) is one." There is abundant evidence that the ancient religious systems generally recognized but one Supreme Divinity, in which all minor powers and essences were included as qualities or attributes. Yet they seem also to have been often regarded as distinct personalities.

22. Plotinus has also described these classes with equal distinctness. All from their birth, he declares, make use of the senses before they have acquired any superior perception. He adds that, "Some proceed no further, but pass through life considering the things of sense to be the first and last of all; and as they apprehend that what is painful is evil, and that whatever is pleasant is good, they think it sufficient to pursue the one and to avoid the other. Others have a greater share of intelligence, but do not rise above the earth. Some of these exhibit greater perception, but not superior moral excellence. In the third class are the divine ones who acutely perceive supernal light, rise superior to sense, and live above the world.

23. By "Nature" some understood the Great Goddess, others simply a daemon, others the Superior Mind.

24. Mr. Thomas Taylor classes the intermediary divinities as archai or rulers (principalities, *Ephesians* vi, 12), and apolutoi or liberated; the one being supercosmic and the other supercelestial, or superior to the visible gods in the sky.

25. Iamblichos, in the "Life of Pythagoras," remarks that "He who pours clean water into a muddy well does but disturb the mud." In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus charges the disciples not to give the holy truth to dogs, nor cast pearls before the swine; for the latter will tread the jewels under their feet, and the dogs will rend the uncautious givers.

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Chapter 13. Concerning the Mystic Rites Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

I think, therefore, that all who delight in the spectacle of Theurgic reality ¹ will acknowledge this: that it is not proper to render to the gods partially or imperfectly the devotion which is rendered to them. Thus, therefore, before the gods make their appearance at the Rites, all the powers (potestates or daemons) that are subject to them, are set in motion; ² and when the gods are about to move toward the earth, they come ahead and go before them in procession. He, therefore, who does not bestow on all of them what he should, and address every one according to the honor to which he is entitled, is made to go away uninitiated and disappointed of the participation with the gods. But he who propitiates them all, bringing to every one the gifts in his power that are most suitable and acceptable, always remains safe and without blame, having well and most carefully accomplished the reception of the divine chorus. ³

Since, therefore, this is the case, which of the two is proper: that the ceremonial of the Sacred Rite shall be simple and consisting of a few particulars, or elaborate and adapted to every move – or, so to speak, as if from everything in the world mingled together? If, indeed, the power that is invoked and influenced by the Sacred Rite were simple and of one order alone, the ceremonial of the sacrifices would be of necessity also simple. But suppose the multitude of other powers (daemons and minor spiritual beings) that are aroused and set in motion at the descending of the gods can be included in no simple rite. The theurgists, from being experienced in the performances, are the only ones that know these things accurately, and they alone are able to cognize what constitutes the perfect celebration of the Sacred Ceremony. They are also aware that the omissions, though few, defeat the whole performance of the Sacred Rite, just as when in a harmony a single chord is broken, the whole becomes out of tune and discordant. ⁴

As therefore, in the divine descents which are visible there occurs manifest injury to those who leave any of the superior beings unhonored, ⁵ so likewise when they are present at the sacrifices unseen it is not well to honor one and not another, but instead every one should be honored according to the order to which he is allotted. He who leaves any of them without a gift holds the whole thing fast and destroys the one and entire arrangement. He does not, as some may therefore imagine, make the reception an imperfect one, but, on the other hand, he absolutely overturns the whole purpose of the Sacred Rite.

SACRED RITES MULTIFORM

What then? Does not the highest part of the Sacred Technic recur of itself to the One Supreme above the whole multitude of divinities, and yet at the same time worship in

him the many essences and principalities?

Certainly, I may be answered, but this takes place at a very late period, and only with the exceedingly few; and if it comes at the very sunset of life, they are content. Our present discussion, however, does not set forth the law for a man of such character, for he is superior to all law; ⁶ but it establishes such a system of law for those who are in need of superior legislation. ⁷ It says accordingly, that as the universe is a system from many orders combined into one, so it is proper that the complete ceremonial of the Sacred Rites, unceasing and entire, shall be joined with the whole category of the superior races. Certainly, indeed, if the cosmos is manifold and entire, and is constituted in many orders, it is proper accordingly that the Sacred Performance shall copy its various features, because of all the powers which they present to view. ⁸ Hence, in relation to these and to the various kinds that are about us, it is not proper for us to be intimately connected with the divine causes (or beings) that are over them, from a part of the qualities in them. On the contrary, we should not aspire to be with their leaders, when anything on our part is omitted or incomplete.

THE BENEFITS FROM THE SACRIFICES

The diversified mode of celebrating the Holy Rite in the Sacred Performances, therefore, not only purifies us, but it also makes perfect something of the defects in us or about us, establishes in harmony and order, and otherwise delivers us from faults of deadly character. ⁹ It likewise brings all into familiar relations with the races superior to us. And, certainly, when the divine causes and the human adaptations closely resembling them meet together to the same end, the initiation or Perfective Rite assures every full and ample benefit of the sacrifice.

It will not be amiss, however, to add such particulars as the following in order to give an accurate understanding in respect to these things. The divinities of the highest order have always a superabundance of power, and while it is superior to all it is at the same time present with them all equally without impediment. In conformity with this statement, therefore, the very first illuminate the last, and those who are superior to matter are present with those belonging with matter, but not after the manner of the world of matter.

Let no one be surprised even though we say that there is a certain matter that is pure and divine. For it originates from the Father and Demiurgos of the universe and possesses a completeness of its own suitable for a receptacle of gods. At the same time nothing obstructs the superior races from being able to illuminate the lower orders from their own substance. Nor does anything hold matter back from participating of the superior natures. So far as it is perfect, pure and evidently good it is not an unsuitable receptacle of the gods. ¹⁰ For as it is necessary that the races in the earth shall be in no respect deprived of a divine participation, the earth also receives a divine portion from it, which is sufficient to admit the gods.

The Theurgic discipline, therefore, recognizing these things and thus discovering in

common with others the suitable receptacles of the gods according to the individual peculiarity of each, often joins together stones, plants, animals, and sacred aromatics, perfect and godlike, and afterward forms from all these a receptacle complete and pure. For it is not proper to be dissatisfied with everything material, but only with that which is repugnant to the gods. But that particular matter is to be chosen which is akin to them as capable of being in accord both in building the Houses of the gods, in the setting up of carved images, and, in fine, in the sacred ceremonial of sacrifices. For in no other manner can there be any participation in the receiving of the superior beings in places upon the earth or by human beings dwelling there unless such a beginning shall have been first established.

We ought; then, to confide in the arcane declarations, that by means of the holy spectacles, a certain principle of matter is transmitted from the gods. This matter without doubt is of the same nature with the very ones themselves by whom it is given. Hence, does not the sacrificing of such a kind of matter arouse the gods to the visible manifestation, invite them to come quickly to our perception, and likewise receive them when they are present and cause them to unfold them-selves perfectly to view?

THE KIND OF SACRIFICES MOST PROPER

The same things may also be learned from the assignment of the gods according to places, and from the division of authority over every particular thing, so far as they are assigned according to the different ranks, or the greater or lesser allotments. For this is certainly plain: that to the gods that are in large over particular places the things that are produced by them are the most, proper to be brought for sacrifice, and those that pertain to the governed are best suited for the divinities that govern. For to the makers their own works are most particularly gratifying, and to those who first of all introduce certain things such are acceptable above all else. If, on the other hand, certain animals, or plants, or other of the productions upon the earth, are under the rule of the superior races ¹¹ the divinities participate together in their superintendence and procure for us an inseparable union to themselves. Some of these things, therefore, being carefully saved and guarded, increase with the gods the intimate familiarity of those who hold them fast, inasmuch as by being kept inviolate they preserve in full force the communion of gods and men.

Of such a character are some of the animals of Egypt, and in the same manner, the human being everywhere is sacred. ¹² Some of the consecrated victims, however, make the familiar relationship more conspicuous, so far as they affect the analysis in respect to the kindred and more sacred origin of the primitive elements with the Superior (divine) causes. This being accomplished, the benefits which are imparted from it are more perfect.

A TUTELAR DIVINITY TO EVERY PEOPLE

If, then, these were human customs alone and so derived their authority through our institutions, it might be asserted that the Holy Rites of the gods were inventions of our own devising. Now, however, God, who is thus invoked in the sacrifices, is their author,

and the gods and angels ¹³ around him constitute a numerous throng. Under him, likewise, there is a public Overlord assigned by allotment to each nation upon the earth, and to every sanctuary its own. ¹⁴ Of the sacrifices made to the gods, a god is director; of those to the angels, it is an angel; of those to the daemons, a daemon; and in like manner in other cases a superintendent is appointed over each in the manner consonant with the particular race. When, therefore, we bring our sacrifices to the gods, in company with the gods that superintend and make complete the mystic rites, it is our duty at the same time to revere the institution of sacred divine worship in regard to the Sacrifices. At the same time, however, it becomes us to be of good courage as we celebrate the holy rites under the ruling gods, and like-wise to exercise suitable caution, that we may not bring some gift unworthy of the gods, or obnoxious to them.

In conclusion, then, we admonish at all events that the endeavor be made in respect to those around us, gods, angels and daemons, that are distributed according to race, in every part of the universe; and that an acceptable sacrifice shall be presented alike to them all. For only so can the Holy Rites be celebrated in a manner worthy of the divine beings that preside over them.

CONCERNING PRAYER

A part of the Sacred Rites and not the least important is that of the prayers. They fill out the sacrifices to the fullest extent, and through these the entire performance becomes established and perfect. They likewise effect the general combined operation with the worship, and bring the Sacred Service into indissoluble copartnership with the gods. It will not be amiss to relate a few things in respect to this subject. For this very thing is of itself worthy to be learned, and it makes our superior perception in respect to the gods more perfect. ¹⁵

I affirm, therefore, that the first ideal of prayer is a collecting (of our thoughts) and likewise a leading to contact and a genuine knowing of God. Next after this is the binding in communion with a single mind, and also the calling to us of the gifts which the gods have sent down, before the uttering of a word, completing the entire performances before it was perceived. But in the most perfect ideal which is the most perfect form of prayer, the occult union is sealed and its validity assured by the gods, procuring perfect repose in them for our souls. In these three limits in which everything divine is measured, prayer, making our friendship worthy of the gods, gives us the sacred aid from them three-fold. ¹⁶ The first of these relates directly to illumination, the second to a general completion of effort, and the third to the complete fulfillment by means of the fire. ¹⁷ At one time, prayer precedes the Sacred Rites; again it divides the Sacred Performance in the middle, and at another time, it further effects the purpose of the sacrifices. No sacred performance takes place properly, without the supplications in the prayers. But continual exercise in them nourishes our mind and spiritual nature, makes the reception-chambers of the soul vastly more spacious for the gods, ¹⁸ opens the arcana of the gods to human beings, accustoms us to the irradiations of the Light, ¹⁹ and by degrees perfects the qualities within us to a conjoining with the gods, bringing us back again to the very summit.

²⁰ It quietly draws upward our habits of thought and imparts to us the moral qualities of the gods. And besides this, persuasive discourse awakens a fellowship and affection that are indissoluble. It likewise augments the divine love and lights up the divine quality of the soul. It also cleanses away every-thing from the soul that is of a contrary character, and removes whatever about it is of æther-like and luminant spirit, so far as it is allied to the sphere of generated existence. It likewise makes perfect a good hope and confidence in respect to the Light, and, in short, brings to perfection those who are exercised in these disciplines, so that we may call them Companions of the gods.

If this is what may be said of prayer, that it effects in us benefits of such importance, and likewise that it has a close relation to the sacrifices which we have mentioned, does not the object of the Sacred Rites thereby become clear, that it is a participating in intimate relations with the Creator? As then through the celebrating of the Rites, the benefit from it is as much as is conferred by the demiurgic divinities upon human beings. ²¹ Indeed, from that source the exalting, the perfecting and completing influence of the prayers becomes manifest, how it becomes active, how unifying, and it has a common bond which is given from the gods. In the third place, therefore, any one may easily perceive from what has been said, that the two (prayer and sacrifice) are established through each other and impart to each other the sacred power of the holy perfective rite.

Hence there is manifest through all parts of the Sacerdotal System, the complete agreement and joint working with itself: the parts of it being more naturally connected than those of any animal, and joined together by one uninterrupted continuity of substance. Of this fact we ought never to be unmindful; nor should we accept half of it and reject the other half, but should be exercised in them all alike. It is necessary that they who desire genuinely to be conjoined with the gods should be initiated through the whole of them.

These things, therefore, may not be otherwise.

Notes:

1. The spectacular representations exhibited at the Sacred Rites to candidates for initiation and others participating in the worship.

2. The “powers” are here distinctly set forth as spiritual essences. Proklos recognizes them as belonging to the order of daemons, and informs us that there is an innumerable company of them about every god, and that they are named by his appellations, as though they were themselves the divinity. “In the most holy scenes of the Initiatory Rites,” says he, “prior to the manifestations of the divinity as present, troops of chthonian daemons make their appearance, calling the attention of the candidates from things pure and good to the realm of Matter.”

I am reminded of the “subject-spirits” described by Emanuel Swedenborg. If one of them

is imagined by the individual with whom it is communicating, to be some particular person, then the spirit, as if mesmerized, immediately supposes itself to be that person.
-A.W.

3. The primitive conception of sacrifices was that they afforded refreshment to spiritual beings; as for example, the deceased member of a family. Such offerings are made at stated periods in China and India and were once universal. Daemons and embodied souls were also considered as thus receiving service and delight, and it was to them that the sacrifices were actually devoted. (I Corinthians x, 20.) Hence, sacrifices became festivals to which friends were invited, and the principal viands were consecrated by invoking the divinities. See I Samuel ix, 12, 13-21, 23, and Malachi i, 12.

4. "In the Divine Dramas or Discourses," says Simplikios, "if anything is omitted, or is displaced, or comes up afterward, the divine illumination does not take place, but the remissness of the one who is doing this makes vapid the power of what has been accomplished."

5. Aeneas, the king of Kalydon, it was fabled, once celebrated a sacrifice at which he omitted to honor the goddess Artemis. She by way of punishment sent a boar to ravage his dominions.

6. This declaration is sustained by the Apostle Paul. "If you are led by the spirit of noetic faculty," says he, "you are not under law." The Greek term here used by both writers is *nomos*, an enactment, and not *thesmos*, a sacred decree. Plotinus has explained this mental exaltation here affirmed. "We receive the Infinite by a faculty superior to the understanding," he inculcates; "we enter into a condition of mind in which we are no longer our own selves, but become partakers of the divine nature." The philosopher, it is recorded, has attained this mental and moral exaltation. Its similarity to the state of Yogi or consecration, described by Indian sages, is evident.

7. Syrianos, and Taylor following him, have substituted *thesmos* for *thumos* in the Greek text. The phrase otherwise would have read: "for those who are bound by passion."

8. "Religion is the imitating of what you worship."

9. Expositors interpret these statements as setting forth that the Sacrifices were expiatory or purifying in the way of averting diseases and other impurities, as seems to be signified by the establishing in harmony and order. In the sixteenth chapter the benefits of the Initiatory Rites are substantially classed under three heads, which have been denominated astrologic, iatric or curative, and telestic or perfective. The initiatory or Perfect Rite, it was considered, exalted the candidate beyond the sphere of generated existence, as in the *maksha* or nirvana of the Buddhists.

10. Plato in the *Timaeus* denominates matter, the *materia* or maternal principle of the universe, the *tithoné* or nurse, and the *upodoché* or receptacle, the womb of created things. Professor Butler remarks accordingly that "it is the transition-element between the real and the apparent, the eternal and the contingent."

11. The ancient Egyptians were famed for their veneration of sacred animals, plants and other objects, and many absurd and ridiculous jests have been made on this account. Plutarch carefully explains the matter. "Nothing can be a god to men," says he, "that is either without soul or is under their power." But language is often mistaken in its purport, and symbolic language in particular. What the teacher utters as from his right hand, the hearer receives as with his left. "Those who have not learned the true sense

of the words will also mistake in the things.” In this way statues and emblems have been spoken of as actual objects of worship, and animals that were only symbolic personifications of divinity have been asserted to be the real divinities that were worshipped. The intelligent worshipper had no difficulty in perceiving the real truth.

12. In other words, likely to be a victim at the altar. “As Manetho related, they were used in archaic times to burn living men in the city of Ilithyia, styling them Typhonian.” Ashmes, who expelled the Hyk-sos rulers, put an end to the custom. It existed in Asiatic countries, where Semitic worships existed, and even the Hebrews seem not to have been an exception. As late as the period of the Persian wars with the Greeks, Themistokles is said to have sacrificed three Persian prisoners to the daemons or chthonian gods, and Amestris, the Queen of Xerxes, to have buried fourteen Persians alive. Even at a later period Caius Marius immolated his daughter to propitiate the gods; and some tribes still keep up the custom. There is a formula for human sacrifice among the Shiva-worshippers of India.. The putting of prisoners to death and cannibalism are vestiges of the same practice.

13. The angels are not a common constituent in the Egyptian and Hellenic categories. They were adopted evidently from Judaea or Assyria about the same time.

14. See Daniel x, 13, 21; xii, 1.

15. “Prayer is by no means an insignificant part of the upward path of souls,” says Proklos. Sacrifices and Holy Rites were considered as the body of the prayers, and prayer as the animating principle of sacrifices. The Chaldaean Oracle also declares: “The mortal approaching the fire will receive illumination from the divine ones.”

16. The edition of Scutellius has this fuller reading: “Prayer not only assures us the friendship of the gods, but brings to our hand three fruits, which are, so to speak, golden apples from the Hesperidean gardens.”

Proklos designates these three stages of prayer sunafh, ekpelasis, and enwsis, the contact, the approach, the perfect union. These are preceded by two conditions: to know the different ranks of the divine beings to which they belong, and the oikeiwsis or family alliance by which we become adopted by the gods. We are then without contact or any thing of matter made ready for the illumination.

17. The Chaldaean Oracles describe the Supreme Divinity as Fire, creative-life-bringing and intellectible. “A whirlwind drew forth the bloom of the shadowy fire and impregnated the wombs of the universe.” (Compare Genesis i, 2.) “She is the producer of the work, because she is the giver of life-bringing fire.” The fire as a symbol in the shrine if the temple, and the employment of sacred fire to consume the consecrated parts of the sacrifices, thus represent the Supreme Fire by which all things subsist and are made complete.

18. Proklos adds the following in the way of comment: “It fills the entheast soul to its full measure.”

19. The representation of the Divine essence as a supernal luminance is universal. The passage in the proem of the Johannean Gospel has been the philosophic dogma of all periods: “In the Logos or divine mason, was life, and the life was the light of mankind.” The Chaldaean Oracle also says: “When thou shalt see a very holy fire without definable shape, leaping as it shines, hearken to the voice of the Fire.” Moses and Zoroaster both professed to hear the words of the Deity spoken out of fire. (Deut.

v.)

Pure fire unmingled with material particles is not visible to the human faculty of sight. This explains satisfactorily the apparent contradiction, in which the Supreme Being is depicted as light, and likewise as enveloped in clouds and thick darkness.

20. "Through Prayer," says Proklos, "the summit of moral excellence, the holiness which pertains to the gods, is attained."

21. This is an allusion upon which Plato throws light in the Timaeus. He (the Demiurgos or Creator) charged the junior gods with the work of constructing mortal bodies, as well as everything additional that was required for the human soul. He gave them dominion over these and all things consequent thereto, and bade them rule over the mortal creation as nobly and honorably as they could, in order that it might not become the cause of evil to itself. The "Junior Gods" are those so generally mentioned by our author. They are also classed under the head of aitia – causes or categories – and as we here observe, are the demiurgic or organizing causes.

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Part VI

Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos
CONTAMINATION FROM DEAD ANIMALS

In regard to what remains to be considered, it is high time for me to pass on to the difficulty which you next suggest. "It is also required," you say, "that the Beholder¹ must be pure from the contact of anything dead, and yet of the rites employed to bring the gods hither, many are made effective through dead animals." In order to reconcile these apparent contradictions we will take a survey of the conflict that seems to exist. There is no opposition at all in the case, but it only appears to be a contradiction in terms. For, indeed, if the law of the Rites commanded both that the dead bodies of the sacrifices should not be touched, and also that they should be touched, this would be contradictory to itself. But if it enjoins to keep aloof from those bodies that have not been consecrated, but permits to touch those that are purified, this is no contradiction. ²

Further still, it is not allowable to handle the bodies of human beings after the soul has left them. For there is a certain trace, an eidôlon, or reflection of divine life which has been extinguished in the body by death. But it is not an unholy act to touch other animals that are dead, since they do not share the diviner life. It is, therefore, in the case of the other divinities, such as are not separate from matter, that abstinence from touching is essential, but in that of the gods that preside over animals and are intimately united to them, the invocation through animals in sacrifice is conceded.

According to this view, therefore, there is no contradiction.

CONCERNING IMPURITY FROM THE DEAD

This matter may also be explained in another way. For bodies deprived of life do bring defilement to human beings which are held by matter, because that which is not alive places a stain upon the living individual, like filth upon the clean, and one in a state of privation upon one in possession of a sufficiency, and also because it produces a taint through the natural aptitude to a worse condition by there being the power of dying. But the body produces no defilement upon a daemon, he being entirely incorporeal, and not receiving corruption from anywhere. On the other hand, it is necessary, for him to be superior to the corruptible body, and not to receive from it into himself any reflection of corruption.

This much, therefore, I say in reference to the difficulty which you suggest in regard to the contradiction.

ANIMALS IN DIVINATION

While explaining by itself how divination is performed by means of the sacred animals, as, for example, by hawks, ³ we did not assert in any manner that by the employment of bodies thus brought into affinity, the gods were present. For they are not set over animals singly, either by assignment, or by any relation to the realm of matter. But to the daemons, and especially to those that are apportioned to the realm of matter, such dealing with the agencies of divination may be assigned, different animals being allotted to different ones, and such ascendancy having been established through contiguity, and they not having been assigned by lot to their respective dominion, by lot are entirely independent and clear of the realm of matter. Or, if any one desires it to be set forth, a seat or vehicle may be assigned to them of such a character by means of which they may be enabled to hold converse and give responses to human beings. We must think, then, that this vehicle is pure from contamination of bodies; for no communion whatever exists between that which is pure and the contrary, but there is a reason for it to be conjoined with human beings through the soul of animals. ⁴ For this soul has a nature kindred to human beings, through a like vital principle; and likewise to daemons, because being free from bodies it after a manner exists separately. But as it is intermediate between both, it is subservient to the controlling daemon, yet it makes known to those who are still withheld in the body whatever the overlord directs. Thus a common bond of union is given between them, each to the other.

THE ART OF DIVINING DEFECTIVE

It ought to be borne in mind, however, that the soul that makes use of such methods of divination, not only becomes a hearer of the oracle, but it also contributes from itself, to no small degree, a certain fatality for the accomplishing of it in respect to the performances. For through a certain sympathy of necessity, they are moved together,

and act and prognosticate together. Hence such a mode of divining as this is entirely different from the mode that is divine and genuine ; ⁵ being able to give oracles in relation to trivial and every-day matters – such as pertain to the diversified realm of nature, and are now brought into relation to generated existence. They likewise, impart activities from themselves to those capable of receiving them and produce emotional conditions of many kinds in those who are naturally susceptible to being affected in concert. ⁶ But the perfect faculty of foreknowing is never developed by emotional excitement. For that which is most of all the unchangeable, and likewise the exempt from matter and in every way pure, attains readily to a perception of the future; but that which is commingled with the irrationality and darkness of the corporeal and materialistic nature, is filled with dense ignorance. Hence, it is never well to receive any such ingenious procedure in divination. Nor ought we to make use of it with any considerable eagerness, nor to trust another person that does it, as though it possessed of itself any clear and well-known evidence of truth. This is enough for us to say in relation to this kind of divining.

CONCERNING THREATS MADE IN THE RITES

Come, then, let us discourse about difficulties of another class, that are in the category of occult things, and which contain, as you say, “threats of violence.” In regard to the multitude of threats, the accusation is divided into many parts. For the actor threatens that he will either “assail the sky, reveal to view the arcana of Isis, expose to public gaze the ineffable symbol in Abydos, ⁷ to stop the Baris, scatter the limbs of Osiris like Typhon, or do something else of a similar character.”

The men do not, as you imagine, hold out this form of words as a threat “to the Sun-god, or to the Moon, or any of the divine ones in the sky”; for then there would occur more fearful monstrosities than those of which you angrily complain. On the other hand, as I said before in these explanations, there is in the divisions of the world a class of powers, incapable of judgment, and unreasoning. It receives and obeys a word of command from another, but it neither makes use of intelligence of its own, nor distinguishes the true and the false, or the possible or impossible. Such a race of beings, when threats are held over them incessantly, are thrown into agitation and filled with amazement. Hence, I think that it is natural for this class to be led by forcible utterances, and to attract other things by means of senseless and unstable phantasy.

THE THREATENING FURTHER EXPLAINED

These things have also another explanation, as follows: The theurgic priest, through the power of the ineffable emblems, commands the cosmic spirits, not as a human being, nor as making use of a human soul. ⁸ On the other hand, as one preexisting in the order of the gods, he makes use of threatenings more terrible than he could make from his own being alone. This is not as though he was about to do everything which he confidently affirms, but he teaches by such use of words how much, how great and what power he has through being at one with the gods. This power the knowledge of the ineffable symbols imparts to him.

This also can be said: That the daemons who are distributed by departments, and who are guardians over the departments of the universe, have charge and superintendence individually of the departments to which they were allotted; so that they do not even admit a word to the contrary, but preserve the perpetual continuance of things in the world without change. They assume this unchangeableness, because the order of the gods remains immovably the same. Hence, they do not endure even to a hearing, that this shall be threatened in which the daemons of the atmosphere and those of the earth have their being. ⁹

DAEMONS THE GUARDIANS OF THE MYSTERIES

The subject may also be explained as follows: The daemons have the guardianship of the Ineffable Mysteries. Thus, therefore, I assure you they maintain to a superior degree the orderly arrangement everywhere. For through this the constituent parts of the universe remain in their order because the beneficent power of Osiris continues pure and immaculate, and is not at all commingled with the opposing vice and disorder. The life of all things also remains pure and uncorrupt because the occult life-producing beauties of the rational faculties of Isis do not descend into the body, which is manifest and visible to the senses. But all things remain immutable and ever-coming into existence, ¹⁰ because the course of the sun is never stopped. All things likewise remain perfect and entire because the ineffable arcane in Abydos (or in the inner shrine) are never at any time revealed to profane contemplation. Hence in these conditions, in which consists the safety of all things, I say, in the ineffable symbols being preserved occult and in the unutterable essence of the gods never being repressed by the contrary allotment – this is not endurable even by sound for the daemons to listen to that belong around the earth, namely: that they are diverse in quality, or are unhallowed beings, and that on this account such a style of threatening words has a certain appropriateness to them. No one, however, utters a threat to the gods, nor is any such mode of prayer addressed to them.

Accordingly with the Chaldaeans, with whom there has been a pure language set apart for the gods alone, a threat is never uttered. The Egyptian priests, however, having intermingled at the same time the divine symbolic terms and the daemonian words, make use, when it is proper, of threats.

Thou hast now the answer in relation to these difficulties; concise, indeed, but I think sufficiently clearing away every one of them.

Notes:

1. The epoptes, ephoros, Theôros or candidate undergoing initiation, and so contemplating the views presented for his instruction.
2. Porphyry himself, and Plotinus before him, it may be remarked, did not approve of the killing of animals for food or sacrifice. They also regarded the touch of a dead body as polluting to the person touched.

3. The hawk was held in special esteem in Ancient Egypt. Ra the Sun-God was represented in the hieroglyphics with a hawk's head holding the solar circle in its beak; and Thoth was also depicted having the same emblem, to show that he was the genius of intelligence. The bird was regarded as having the faculty of divining. Its body after death was embalmed and deposited in the shrine at Buto, and whoever killed one, even by accident, was punished by death. In Greece, likewise, the hawk was a symbol of the sun, and sacred to Apollo, the god of oracles.

4. It was held that souls, when separated from the bodies by violence, continue to abide around the bodies, and hence that the theurgic priests were able through their agency to draw the guardian daemons to them.

5. Augustin of Hippo berated Porphyry in regard to this distinction between "divine" or "angelic" and the other communications. "Behold," says he, "Iamblichos, the patron of the Egyptian priests, deserts his clients."

6. This accounts also for the enthusiasm characteristic of the Bacchic festivals, and kindred exhibitions at public assemblies, where some powerful influence predominates. Such nervous affections as hysteria and epilepsy are sometimes occasioned in such ways. In the old languages the same terms are used to denote mental derangement and prophetic inspiration.

7. In the Greek text of the Letter of Porphyry this term is "adyton," the inner shrine of the temple, but here it is Abydos, a city in Middle Egypt, where was the most ancient temple to Isis and Osiris, and also a "tomb." Some writers insist that only the adytum was meant; others that reference is made to the shrine at Abydos. This was the oldest metropolis in Egypt.

The theologic myths of Egypt contain an explanation of these expressions. Osiris and Isis, or Uasar and Uasi, were the two principal divinities commemorated in the Egyptian Sacred Rites. They were doubtless of Asiatic origin, and the legend seems to be a representation of the contest with the Shepards. Seth, Sutekh, or Typhon was the tutelary god of Northern Egypt of the Hyk-sos, and of the Kheti or Hittites of Asia. He is described as the brother of Osiris and as having treacherously murdered him, and afterward dismembering the body. The widowed Isis wanders over Egypt and to Phoenicia in quest of his remains. They are finally transported in the boat Bans to their final resting-place. The simulacrum of one part is placed in every shrine as a sacred relic. These things were commemorated in the Sacred Rites.

8. See Part IV, Chapter 10. "In all theurgic rites there is a double character put forward: the one as a human being, the other as participating of a superior nature and exalted to the order of divinities. In the former the priest makes the invocation as a man and supplicates the superior beings; in the other, he commands the powers of the universe, because through the ineffable symbols, he is in some manner invested with the sacred character of the gods."

9. The powers having as their vahan or vehicle the sun, moon, and stars, were the daemons thus threatened.

10. In the ancient philosophy, creation was identical with generation. Hence the universe is styled "seigenes" or ever generated, as being constantly replenished and renewed. Creation is a work always taking place.

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Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

Those difficulties require for solution the same divinely wise Muse. I desire, beforehand, however, to interpret to thee the peculiar form of the theologic system of the Egyptians. For they, endeavoring to represent the productive principle of the universe and the creative function of the gods, exhibit certain images as symbols of mystic, occult and invisible conceptions, in a similar manner as of Nature (the productive principle), in her peculiar way, makes a likeness of invisible principles through symbols in visible forms. ¹ But the creative energy of the gods delineates the genuine reality of the forms through the visible images. The Egyptian priests, therefore, perceiving that all the superior races are gratified at the resemblances of the inferior tribes to themselves, and desiring to supply the latter with benefits through such representations, so far as possible, do themselves bring into use for them as may be expected, a mode of initiation into the mysteries which is appropriately concealed in the symbols.

SYMBOL EXPLAINED.

Listen, therefore, to the spiritual interpretation of the symbols, according to the conception of the Egyptian priests, dismissing from thy imagination and hearing the phantom-likeness of the symbols themselves, and bringing thyself upward to the spiritual reality.

By "ilus" or slime, then, recognize everything of a corporeal nature or belonging to the realm of matter, or that is nourishing and procreative, or such as is a material form belonging to the realm of nature and borne along with the never-still currents of the realm of matter, or such as the river of generative existence contains and which sinks with it, or the originating cause of the elements and of all the powers relating to the elements, which subsisted before in correspondence to a foundation. ²

It being of such a quality, God, who is author of all generation and production, and of all elemental forces, as being superior to them, immaterial and incorporeal, exalted above the realm of nature and likewise begotten and undivided, entire of himself and concealed in himself, is supreme above all these and embraces them all in himself. And because he contains everything and gives himself to all the universe, he is made-manifest out from them. Because he is superior to the universe, he is spread out over it by himself, and is manifested as separate, removed, high in the air and unfolded by himself above the forces and elementary principles in the world. ³

The following symbol likewise attests this: For the one "sitting above the lotus-blossom" expresses enigmatically an exaltation above the slime, and likewise denotes spiritual and empyrial supremacy. ⁴ For everything pertaining to the lotos, both the forms in the leaves and the appearance of the seed, is observed to be circular. This

very energy is akin to the unique circle-like motion of the mind, manifesting it in like manner according to the same forms, in a single arrangement, and according to one principle.

The god himself, however, is seated alone, above any such dominion or energy, august and holy, filled abundantly, and remaining in himself without change, as the figure of one sitting is intended to signify. ⁵

The one “sailing in a Boat” ⁶ sets before the mind the power that directs the world. As, therefore, the Pilot, being apart from the ship, has the control of its rudders, so the Sun subsisting separately has control of the helms of all the world. And as the pilot from above at the stern, giving forth from himself the first brief beginning of the course, directs everything, so by an infinite priority of rank, the God from above, imparts without division from the first principles of Nature, the first-operative causes of motions. These things, therefore, and still more than these, are denoted by One Sailing in a boat.

THE SUN THE SOURCE OF ENERGY.

Every department of the sky, every sign of the zodiac, every celestial course, every period of time according to which the world is put in motion, and all perfect things receive the forces which go forth from the Sun. Some of these forces are closely interblended with these, but others are superior to any commingling with them. Accordingly, the symbolic mode of expression also suggests them: “Assuming a shape according to the Signs of the Zodiac and changing forms according to the Season.” It likewise manifests his unchangeable, constant, unceasing and generally universal and abundant giving to the whole world.

The different receivers, however, are variously affected with regard to the indivisible boon of the divinity, and they receive from the Sun powers of many kinds according to their peculiar impulses. In this way the series of symbols coming in succession, is designed, through the multitude of gifts, to make manifest the One God the Sun, and through the manifold powers exhibited, to cause his one power to appear. Hence, also, it sets forth that he is One and the Same, but that the changes of shape and the transformations are taken for granted among the recipients. ⁷

On this account it is affirmed that the Sun changes “according to the sign of the zodiac and according to the season,” because these manifestations are diversified with respect to the god, according to the many forms of his reception.

The Egyptian priests make use of such prayers to the Sun, not only at the Autopsias, but also in the more public prayers which have an interior sense, and are offered to the divinity with reference to such a symbolic initiation into Mysteries. ⁸

Hence it is not permitted that anyone shall offer any explanation.

"THE TERMS THAT ARE UNINTELLIGIBLE."

But the enquiries which follow, if we are to go through with them sufficiently in detail, require more information. Yet it is equally necessary in replying to bring out the truth in relation to them in few words. Thou demandest: "Why are terms preferred that are unintelligible?" ⁹

They are not "unintelligible," however, as thou hast thought. Nevertheless, let them be unknown to us, or let some of them be known, with reference to which we receive solutions from the gods; they, certainly, are all of them significant to the gods in a manner not divulged. Nor can they be significant and also oracular with human beings through imaginings, but either spiritually by the mind which is at once divine and human, ¹⁰ or in silence, or to express the conception in a better and simpler manner, by a mind united with the gods. ¹¹

We should, therefore, set aside all conceits and logical quibbles in regard to the divine names, and should, likewise, pay no attention to natural resemblances of speech which are closely akin to objects in the realm of nature. In the same manner, then, as the symbolic token of the divine likeness is spiritual and divine, the same thing is to be taken for granted in the names. Indeed, although we may not know it, this very thing is the most august in the case, for it is too grand to be classified for the purpose of being made known. In regard to those, however, of which we have received the skill to interpret the meaning, we possess in the name, the knowledge of the divine essence, power and order. Moreover, we guard carefully in the soul the mystic and ineffable image of the gods; and through this we lead the soul upward to the gods, and having exalted it as far as possible, we ally it with the gods.

But you ask, "Why of names that are significant, do we place foreign ones before those of our own language?" ¹² The reason for this, also, is connected with the Mystic Rites. For the gods have made known that of the Sacred Nations, like the Egyptians and likewise the Assyrians, the entire dialect is suitable for sacred places. Hence, we believe that we ought to address our communications in speech native to the gods; and because such a mode of speaking is primitive and ancient, and most of all, as those who learned the first terms relating to the gods, mingled them with their own language and transmitted it to us, as being proper and suitable for these things, we have always preserved the law of tradition till the present time inviolate. For whatever else pertains to the gods, plainly the everlasting and unchangeable is kindred to them.

WHY FOREIGN SACRED TERMS MAY NOT BE TRANSLATED.

It is then objected: "If the one who hears the voice gives attention to the signification, it is enough that the concept remains the same, whatever the term may be." The fact, however, is not as thou imaginest. For if terms had been fixed by conventional agreement, it would make no difference if some should be used instead of others. But if they are closely allied together in the nature of the things that have being, ¹³ those the more like it will be most assuredly the more agreeable to the gods. From this fact it appears agreeable to reason that the language of the sacred nations has been adopted in preference to that of the rest of mankind. For terms when

they are translated do not always preserve their meaning the same as before; and besides, there are certain idioms with every nation that are impossible to express to another in intelligible speech. Accordingly, though, it may be possible to translate them; they no longer preserve the same force. "Foreign terms," likewise, have great emphasis and much conciseness, and contain less ambiguity, diversity and varied shades of meaning. For all these reasons they suit the Superior Races.

Away, then, with conjectures which deviate from the truth: such as this, whether "the divinity that is invoked is Egyptian in race or makes use of the Egyptian language." Understand instead that the Egyptians were the first of mankind that were allotted to communion with the gods; ¹⁴ and the gods that are invoked delight in the Egyptian customs.

Suppose, then, "these are all of them artful contrivances of jugglers," how is it possible that these things without which no sacred performance takes place successfully, which in the highest degree conjoin us with the gods, and combine us with them, and which possess powers almost equal to those of the superior races, should be only figments of the imagination? On the other hand, is it not true that "these are disguises that have their origin in the passive conditions about us through being attributed to the divine agency?" For it is not from what we have experienced, but on the contrary, from what are peculiar attributes of the gods, that we are aroused and address to them naturally the expressions proper for them. Nor do we form "conceptions of the divine nature contrary to what it actually is." On the other hand, wherein it is natural, and as they who first established the laws of holy religious worship have come upon the truth respecting it, so we continue in them. For if anything of different customs of a religious character harmonizes with them, it is what does not change. And it is necessary with the ancient prayers as with the sacred places of asylum to preserve them inviolate and in the same manner, neither taking anything from them nor adding anything to them from any other source. ¹⁵ For this is perhaps the reason why at the present time everything is going to decay, and both the occult terms and the prayers have become without efficiency. They are constantly undergoing changes through the innovating disposition and the lawlessness of the Greeks, and nothing remains as it was. For the Greeks are by nature fond of innovation, and they are carried onward rushing eagerly in every direction. They have no ballast in them and they do not preserve what they received from anybody; but letting it quickly go, they remodel everything according to a never-ceasing fluency of words. But the foreign priests are steadfast in their customs, and continue firmly with the same words; for which reason, making use of the words grateful to them, they are themselves beloved by the gods. Nevertheless, to change them in any way is not lawful for any human being.

This much we have answered thee in regard to the words which are called both unutterable and barbarous ¹⁶ or foreign, and yet are becoming in holy rites.

Notes:

1. See //Herodotus//: II, 60. Plutarch, Isis and Osiris 18, and throughout.
2. This definition of ilus or slime applies also to hulê, the foundation-principle of everything denominated "material." It is a concept of the mind, and not a something that can be weighed, measured, or perceived by the senses: and if the term has any intelligible meaning, it may be designated as passive, negative or objectified force.
3. The representation of the winged disk, so common in Egyptian symbolism, is here denoted. The description also applies to the figures-of Assur and Ahuramazda of the Assyrian and Persian temples floating in the air above the Sacred Tree and the adoring King and priests.
4. The lotos or Nymphæ was anciently esteemed as the queen of the world of blossoms. Each of its numerous species seems to have been regarded as sacred in some of the ancient nations, and the same veneration is still maintained in China and India. The American pond-lily is of the same family. It has been conjectured to have received its distinction from the analogy of its seeds, which sprout in the capsule of the plant and begin to grow till they burst the pericarp and float away to take root in the slime by themselves.

The Egyptian priests were accustomed to exhibit simulacra of the gods in circles and globes as symbols of the uniform principle of life. Hermes Trismegistus compared Divinity to a circle, and the sublime description will be remembered, that its centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere. The Pythagoreans regarded the circle as sacred, and considered it as the symbol of the highest spiritual truth. It also represents very aptly all human progress, which is never in straight lines, but in circles returning on themselves as if advancing in ascending spirals or retrograding in vortexes tending downward.

5. Horus as Har-pocrates was depicted as sitting on the cup of the lotos-blossom, with a finger on his mouth, contemplating the circle, and was the divinity here signified.
6. Porphyry: Cave of the Nymphs: "The Egyptians represented the Sun and all the daemons as not connected with anything solid or stable, but as elevated on a sailing vessel."
7. In this way, the Sun and Moon, though always of the same dimension, vary in apparent size and color, owing to accidents of the position of the earth, and the conditions of the spectator's eyesight.
8. Porphyry in his //letter to Anebo//, interrogated him directly about these matters. "For this is said to be seen at the Autopsias," says he, "and they unwittingly attribute to that divinity a peculiar incident of their own imagination. If, however, these expressions are uttered figuratively, and are symbolic representations of his forces, let them tell the interpretation of the symbols. For it is plain that if they denote the condition of the Sun, as in eclipses, they would be seen by every one who looked toward it intently."

The Autopsia was the final experience at the Initiatory Rite, when the candidate became an epoptes or Beholder. It was at once a view of one's own interior self and a vision of the Divinity. "Such a one," says Pindar, "knows the end of life and its sources from God." Paul the apostle is a little more explicit. "Such a man," says he, "was rapt into Paradise and heard ineffable things which it is not permitted a man to repeat." Hence

Abammon declines to grant Porphyry's demand.

9. The terms to which this reference is supposed to be made, are such as were enumerated by Alexander Trallianus: "Men, Thren, Mor, Phor, Teux, Za, Zôn, The, Lou, Khri, Gr, Ze, On." By these words, Trallianus declared, the sun becomes fixed in the heavens. He adds also others: "Iax, Azuph, Zuôn, Threux, Ban, Khôk." Very likely these as well as the famous Ephesian "spells," belong to an archaic language, which remained as a dialect of priests after having passed out of common use. The Latin language used in the Roman worship, the Hebrew in the Jewish, and the Sanskrit in the Brahman are analogous examples. Diodoros affirms that a barbarous or foreign dialect was used in the Samothrakian arcane rites. The expression, "Konx om pax," at the Eleusinia has perplexed scholars for centuries. Mr. Robert Brown, Jr. however, has traced it to the Akkad origin, and shows it to be a profession of the Supreme Truth of existence.

There has always been a "language of priests:" the ancients called it "speech of the gods." Homer gives us names in that dialect as well as those given by "men." The monarchs of Egypt and Assyria took divine names in addition to their family designations, and the practice has been followed for many centuries by the Popes of Rome, when taking office, to adopt a saint's name for their official title. The Mystic Rites were accompaniments of the Sacred language. They were observed in every ancient nation that had a literature, and seem to have been derived from the country of the Euphrates. It was esteemed sacrilegious to divulge them, and the holy name of a divinity was not permitted to be uttered outside the temple. See Exodus xx: 7.

10. In other words, we comprehend first principles by simple intuition.

11. This was called a visible manifestation of divinity. A philosopher remarks: "From the clearness of the mind and the refulgence of divine splendor, the presence of Divinity is perceived at once.

12. As Assyria is the chief Semitic country, the languages of Chaldaea and the Israelites are included under the designation. But whatever his dialect Abammon declares that Man is sacred everywhere. V, xxiv. There is a change of terms, however, in the question from those found in the //Letter of Porphyry to Anebo//, as will be seen by comparing.

13. Proklos considered that there were three classes of divine terms: the principal of which was for the gods themselves: the second was devised for the daemons, and the third was employed by sagacious men in relation to matters of their own devising. The former of these were considered as possessing energy and power.

14. The extraordinary antiquity of the Egyptians and their modes of worship is everywhere recognized. They were an archaic people and were highly civilized when they first became known to other nations.

15. Proklos speaks of these prayers as follows: "The purifying petition is the one which is offered for the purpose of averting diseases of the character of plague, and other contagious: we have such inscribed in the temples." Porphyry has preserved a petition somewhat like one in the Gospel according to Luke. "O Lord, the Sun and you other divinities, the dispensers of life to human beings, accept me and commend me to the immortal gods as your servant. So long as I have lived I have always worshipped

the gods whom my parents taught me should be venerated.”

After the adoption of the Bacchic rites from Asia into Greece, the prayers or hymns to the new divinity were as numerous and almost as diverse as the States. The worshippers were principally women and the Eleans had a shout of which this is a translation:

”Come Lord Dionysos, Lord Most High,
Into thy holy shrine, the shrine ready for thee
Frenzied, and with feet of ox,
Bull worthy of our praise, worthy Bull.“

”Hero,“ here rendered Lord, and Alioun, Most High, are archaic terms.

16. The term barbarous, used in Greek for alien and foreign, seems to have been formed from the Egyptian term Barbara, the archaic designation of the Egyptian peasantry.

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Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

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Part VIII

Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

We will now pass over these matters, as thou sayest that thou desirest us “to declare plainly what the Egyptian Theosophers believe the First Cause to be: whether Mind or, above Mind: and whether one alone or subsisting with another or with several others: whether unbodied or embodied, and whether the very same as the Creator of the Universe (Demiurgos) or prior to the Creator: also whether all things have their origin out from one or out from many: whether they likewise have knowledge respecting Primal Matter, or of what nature the first bodies were: and whether the Primal Matter was unoriginated or was generated.”

First of all I will tell thee the reason why in the scrolls of the ancient Scribes of the Temple, many and various opinions are offered in regard to these things, and likewise why among those of the persons greatly skilled who are still living, the explanation is not given in simple terms. I say, then, that as there are many essences and these differing, the innumerable many principalities of these being in different orders, were handed down, different ones by different ancient priests.

Hence, as Seleukos ¹ describes, Hermes set forth the universal principles in two thousand scrolls, or as Manetho affirms, he explained them completely in thirty-six thousand five hundred and twenty-five treatises ². The different ancient writers, however, being in conflict with one another, have in many places given different interpretations in regard to the particular essence. It is necessary, however, to

ascertain the truth in respect to them all, and then set it forth to thee concisely as we may be able.

First, then, give me thy attention in regard to this matter about which thou didst first ask.

GOD THE FIRST: GOD THE CREATOR.

Before the things that really are, even the first principles of all things, is One Divine Being, prior even to the first God and King, abiding immovable in the aloneness of his own absolute unity. For neither is Intelligence nor any principle else intermingled with him, but he is established an exemplar of the God self-begotten, self-produced and only-begotten, the One truly Good. For he is the something Absolutely Great and Supreme, the Source of all things, and root of the first ideals subsisting in the Supreme Mind. Then from this One, the God sufficient in himself caused himself to shine forth: ³ and hence he is self-engendered and self-sufficient. For he is the Beginning and God of Gods, a unity proceeding from the One, subsisting before essence, and the principle of essence. For from him are being and essence; and he is called accordingly Noëtarch, Chief of the realm of thought. ⁴

These, then, are the oldest principles of all things. Hermes ⁵ places them before the gods of the Æther, the Empyrean ⁶ and the celestial regions.

MANY NAMES OF GOD -- FORMATION OF MATTER.

According to another arrangement, however, Hermes places the God Emêph ⁷ as leader of the celestial divinities, and declares that he is Mind itself, perceptive of itself and converting the perceptions into his own substance. But he places as prior to this divinity, the One without specific parts, whom he affirms to be the first exemplar ⁸ and whom he names Eikton. ⁹ In him are the First Mind and the First Intelligence, and he is worshipped by Silence alone. ¹⁰ Besides these, however, there are other leaders that preside over the creation of visible things. ¹¹ For the Creative Mind, guardian of Truth and wisdom, coming to the realm of objective existence, and bringing the invisible power of occult words into light is called in the Egyptian language, AMON (the Arcane): but as completing everything in a genuine manner without deceit and with skill, Phtha. The Greeks, however, assume Phtha to be the same as Hephæstos, giving their attention to the Creative art alone. ¹² But as being a dispenser of benefits, he is called Osiris: ¹³ and by reason of his other powers and energies, he has likewise other appellations.

Accordingly there is also with the Egyptians another sovereignty of all the elementary principles in relation to the realm of generation, and of the forces in them. Four of them are reckoned as male and four as female. This sovereignty they assign to the Sun. There is also another empire of universal production around the dominion of objective existence, which they give to the Moon. Then marking off the sky into two parts, or four, or twelve, they place rulers over the parts in turn, more or fewer as the case may be, and over them all they set one who is the Overlord. ¹⁴ Thus the system of

the Egyptian priests in relation to the First Principles, extending from above to the farthest extremes, begins from the One and passes on to the multitude: the many being guided and directed by the one, and the undefined, realm of nature being placed under a defined measure of authority, even of the one Supreme Cause of all things. And the God produced Matter, rending materiality on the under side from essentiality; which being full of life, ¹⁵ the Creator took it and fashioned from it the simple and impassive spheres. But the last of it he organized into bodies that are subject to generation and dissolution.

SUMMARY OF TEACHINGS.

These subjects have now been thoroughly discussed, and in the books which thou mentionest as having met with by chance, the solution of thy doubts is clear. For those which have been brought forward as the Books of Hermes contain Hermetic doctrines, although they are often set forth in the manner of speaking peculiar to the (Grecian) philosophers. For they were translated from the Egyptian language by men who were skilled in philosophy. But Chæremon ¹⁶ and others, if there are any, who have treated of the primary causes in relation to the world, also explain the last principles. ¹⁷ As many as hand down observations respecting the planets, the Zodiac, the decans, the horoscopes and the "Mighty Leaders," ¹⁸ so called, make known the distribution of the rulers to their respective domains. The particulars that are mentioned in the calendars comprise a very small part of the Hermaic arrangement, and those in relation to the stars (or asterisms) or the phases, or occultations, or the increase or decrease of the Moon, are among the last things in the delineations of causes by the Egyptian sages.

The Egyptian priests do not "explain everything as relating to natural objects." On the contrary they distinguish the life of the soul, and also the spiritual principle, from Nature itself, not only in respect to the universe, but also in respect to ourselves. Regarding it as firmly established that the Mind, and likewise the reasoning faculty, have being by themselves, they affirm that the things that are born are created. They likewise place the Creator as First Ancestor of those in the realm of generated existence, ¹⁹ and they acknowledge the life-imparting power prior to the heaven and subsisting in the heaven. They likewise set forth Pure Mind as above the world, and also the One without specific parts in the universal world, and another that is distributed among all the spheres. ²⁰

They do not by any means contemplate these things with the reasoning faculty alone, but they also teach that by means of the sacerdotal theurgy, the aspirant may mount up to the higher and more universal, and those conditions established superior to Fate, to God the Creator (Demiurgos): neither becoming attached to the realm of matter, nor taking hold of anything else besides only the observing of a proper time. ²¹

PRELUDE TO FURTHER EXPLANATIONS.

Hermes also points out the same path. Bitys, a prophet, explained it to King Amasis,

²² having found it inscribed in hieroglyphics in the inmost shrine at Sâis in Egypt. ²³ He also divulged the name of the god that extends through the whole world. ²⁴

There are also, however, many other arrangements in relation to the same things. Hence thou dost not seem to me to be right in saying that with the Egyptian priests all things are carried back to physical categories. For in their system, principles are many and concern many essences. There are likewise supermundane potentates whom also they worshipped by the Sacerdotal rite. To me, therefore, these things appear to furnish common starting-points for the solution of all remaining enquiries. But since we ought to leave none of them without examination, we will add them to these problems, and likewise hammer round them on all sides in order that we may see where thou conjecturest that there is anything unsound.

THE TWO SOULS OF MAN.

Thou also affirmest “that very many of the Egyptians attribute to the motion of the stars whatever may happen to us.” But what the fact is must be explained to thee by many of the Hermaic concepts. ²⁵

For man, as these writings affirm, has two souls. The one is from the First Intelligence and is participant of the power of the Creator, but the other is given from the revolutions of the worlds of the sky, to which the God-beholding soul returns. ²⁶

These things being conditioned after this manner the soul that comes into us from the worlds follows (and is affected by) the periodic circuits of those worlds. But the soul that is in its higher mental quality from the world of Intelligence, is superior to the movement of the world of generated existence ²⁷ and through this there takes place both the unbinding of fate, and the upward progress to the gods of the World of Mind. The theurgic discipline (or initiation), so far as it conducts upward to the Unbegotten, is made complete by a life of this kind.

LIBERATION FROM FATE.

That condition, therefore, about which thou utterest doubt, does not exist, namely: “That all things are bound fast in the indissoluble bonds of Necessity, which they term Fate.” For the soul has a principle of its own leading around to the realm of Intelligence, and not only standing aloof from things of the world of generated existence, but also joining it to that which is, ²⁸ even to the divine nature.

Nor do we “connect Fate with the gods whom we worship in temples and with carved images, as being unbinders of Fate. Yet the gods do “unbind Fate,” but it is the last and lowest natures that descend from them and are in close alliance to the genesis of the world and to the body, that make Fate complete. With good reason, therefore, do we perform to the gods every holy rite in order that they may deliver us from the evils impending over us from destiny, as they alone, through the moral power of persuasion, have rule over necessity.

Nevertheless all things in the world of Nature are not controlled by Fate. On the contrary, there is another principle of the soul which is superior to the whole realm of nature and generated existence. By it we can be united to the gods, rise above the established order of the world, and likewise participate in the life eternal and in the energy of the gods of the highest heaven. Through this principle we are able to set ourselves free. For when the better qualities in us are in activity, and the soul is exalted to those beings superior to itself, then it becomes separate altogether from every thing which held it fast in the realm of generated existence, keeps itself aloof from inferior natures, exchanges one life for the other, and gives itself to a different order, entirely abandoning the former.

THE LIBERATION FURTHER EXPLAINED.

Why, then (it may be asked), is it not possible to liberate one's own self through the gods that revolve in the sky (the ruling planets), to consider them as Lords of Destiny, and also as binding our lives with bonds that are not to be dissolved?

Perhaps there is nothing to hinder this very thing. Although the gods possess numerous essences and powers in themselves, there are also inherent in them as many impracticable differences and contradictions. Nevertheless, it is lawful to affirm as much as this: that in every one of the gods, especially of those that are visible (in the sky), there are principles of essence which are of the world of Intelligence; and that through these, takes place the release for souls from generated existence in the world.

But although there were to be two classes of divine beings left, the gods that abide around the world, and those beyond, there will be liberty for souls through the gods above the world. These things are told more precisely in the "Treatise Concerning the Gods" ²⁹ – as for example, who are the restorers, and what are their powers; and also how do they liberate from fate, and through what sacred paths upward; also of what quality is the arrangement of the mundane realm of nature, and how does the absolutely perfect moral energy rule over it? ³⁰ Hence the passage which thou hast repeated from the Homeric poem – "even the gods themselves are yielding," it is a profanation to utter. For the performances at the Sacred Worship in ancient times were prescribed by laws that were both pure and spiritual. Those who are in inferior conditions are liberated by a superior order and power; and when we remove ourselves from conditions that are inferior we come into a better allotment. It is not effected, however contrary to any sacred ordinance that has existed from ancient times, in such a manner as to imply that the gods may be changed (in disposition or purpose) by sacred rites afterward performed. On the contrary, from their first descent till this present time God sent down the souls in order that they should return back again to him. ³¹ Never, therefore, does there a change occur by such a progress upward, nor do the descents of the souls, and their ascending occasion violent conflict. For as generated existence and every thing here are joined together at every point by the spiritual essence, so also in the arrangement of souls, the liberation from the conditions of generated existence accords with the diligence of those around the realm of generated existence.

Notes:

1. Seleukos is mentioned by Porphyry as a theologist and by Suidas as having written two hundred books in relation to the gods. By “scrolls” it is probable that only single discourses were meant, such as would now be given in a pamphlet.

2. An Egyptian, Man-e-Thoth, or beloved Thoth. He was a priest at Sebennytus in the province of Sâis, in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphos, and compiled a history of ancient Egypt. This Number 36,525 is enigmatic, as it indicates by its analogy to the 365.25 days in a year.

3. The Hindu purana gives a similar statement: “He whom mind alone can perceive, whose essence eludes the external organs, who has no visible parts, who is of eternity, – even He, the Soul of all beings, whom no being can comprehend, shone forth in personality. He willed to produce the various beings from his own divine substance.”

4. “Under two Minds,” says Damaskios, “the Life-imparting fountain of souls is comprehended.” One, the Immovable First Cause, the Second, the Demiurgos or Creator.

5. See PART I, Chapter II. Hermes the superlatively Great, was the titular author of numerous philosophic treatises, from the forty-two mentioned by Clement to the innumerable multitude mentioned by others.

6. The Greek term *empurion*, signifies “the region of fire.” In the ancient cosmology, there was a fifth element, the *sether*, more pure and divine than the common atmosphere. It was an *akasha*, a pure fire and diviner matter: and of it the celestial bodies were composed. In the Babylonian and other theories there were three heavens, as here designated: the *æther*-heaven, the *Empyrial* or fire-region, and the *supracelestial* above all. There were divinities of the second order peculiar to each.

7. Several have conjectured that this name should have been “Kneph” – Neph or Num, the “Good Daemon.” This was the name of the Creator in Nubia and also in Elephantina, and he was considered to be the same as Amun, the Supreme God at Thebes. The name Neph, almost identical with the Semitic term “*nephesh*” or soul, reminds us that this god was considered as the “Soul of the World.” It should also be remembered, however, that the name “Emeph” seems to be the same as Imoph, Motph or Imhetep, which signifies the “son of Phtha.” In fact, this divinity was one of the triad of tutelaries of Memphis, which consisted of Phtha, his consort Pakht, or Bast, and their son Imhetep. Marietta-Bey considered him as the same as Thoth or Hermes, the god of learning. The Greeks, however, identified him with Asklepios and the Orientals with Esmun, of the Kabeirian Rites.

8. Ficino substitutes the term *paradeima*, or exemplar in the text, for *mageuma*, or magic power.

9. This term is Greek, and its meaning is “the Likeness,” and so the Ideal of the Universe.

10. Damaskios relates that the Babylonians recognized the one First Cause, passing it over in silence. But it is probable that instead of *Sigé* or Silence, the divine intermediary, *Siku*, was the being actually named.

11. Plato: *Timaeus*, XII, v, “The Deity himself formed the divine part in man, and

delivered over to his celestial offspring the task of forming the mortal. These subordinate divinities, copying the example of their parent, and receiving from his hands the immortal principle of the human soul, fashioned subsequently to this the mortal body, which they consigned to the soul as a vehicle, and in which they placed another kind of soul, the seat of violent and fatal affections."

12. The Semitic name P'T'H, Phtha, signifies the opener, the revealer, the Creator. Perhaps Semitic influence in Northern Egypt, which was of remote antiquity, accounts for the selection of the designation. When the early sovereignty of Egypt was at Memphis, Pth'ch was the chief divinity. After the expulsion of the Hyksos dynasty, the seat of power was transferred to Thebes in the South, and Amun or Amur-Ra (the Mystic Sun) was exalted to the supremacy. He was often figured like Kneph, with the head of a ram, indicating that the two were the same. Indeed, the Egyptian religion was actually at its core monotheistic. The various divinities were only aspects or personifications of different attributes.

13. This name in the Egyptian dialect is variously spelled, as different readers supply the letters from the hieroglyphics. Plutarch states that the Egyptians pronounced it Husiris, and it is sometimes rendered Asar and Ussar. One Egyptian dogma makes it out Hes-iri, which would mean the Seat of Isis. It seems in its form to resemble Assur the God of Nineveh and Iswara, the Siva of India.

14. This, it will be noticed, relates directly to astrology and the casting of nativities, which was a constituent part of former sciences and religions, and is apparent in some of the modern customs.

15. "When we treat of matter," says Plutarch, "we need not conceive in our minds a body void of soul and of all quality and of itself wholly idle and inactive. We ought to conceive that this goddess (or divine entity) which always participates of the First God and is ever taken up with the love of those excellences and charms that are about him is not by nature opposite to him: that like a good-natured woman that is married to a man and constantly enjoys his embraces, yet hath a fond kind of longing after him, so hath she always a strong inclination to the God, though she be present and round about him, and though she be impregnated with his most prime and pure particles."

16. Chæremôn was the Scribe or literary man of a Temple. Suidas mentions him as belonging in Alexandria, and both Martial and Porphyry speak of him as a Stoic philosopher. He is quoted in Josephus, as giving the account of the Expulsion of the Lepers or alien people from Egypt, whom Manetho conjectured to have been the Israelites.

17. The twelve mouths were divided by astrologers into thirty-six decans, and over each was a decanus or episcopus, whose office was to protect against calamity. The "horoscopus" was the caster of a nativity, one who forecasted a career from the conditions of the planets and zodiacal constellations at the time of birth.

18. The Twelve Gods who preside over the months of the year are thus designated. "While," says S. F. Dunlap, "the Babylonians offered sacrifices to the spirits of the dead, and the Twelve Gods presided over the months, and the thirty-six gods over the decani of the calendar; while Gods innumerable, portents, prophets, soothsayers and astrologers perplexed the people, the Chaldaeans philosophized in their schools on the causes of things and the modus operandi of Nature and Creation."

19. Chæremôn declared the Sun to be the Creator or Demiurgos. The vivific influences emanating from it, and the fact that the planetary world issued from it in the

unknown periods of geologic antiquity, lend an air of plausibility to the hypothesis.

20. It was taught by Anaximander that the earth was in the centre of a series of concentric spheres in which the sun, moon and stars were placed. The Pythagoreans held that the heavenly bodies were in these spheres revolving round a central fire.

21. In astrologic and other magic displays it is considered necessary to select carefully a proper time for consultation and ceremonies.

22. Amasis or Ashmes II, was the successor of Apries or Pharaoh-Hophra, of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, whom he drove from power. He belonged at Sâis and bore the title of "Son of Neith." He obliged the priests of Egypt to admit Pythagoras and Solon to the temples to be instructed in the Egyptian learning. Bitys is conjectured to have been the priest Utaharpenses, who made public the names of the planets, which had been a sacerdotal secret, as was also the heliocentric theory.

23. Sâis was the metropolis of a nome or principality in Northern Egypt, and a rival of Memphis in wealth and importance. Its prince, Tafnekht, famous for having cursed the memory of Menes, raised the standard of revolt against the Ethiopian Overlord, and his lineal descendant Psametikhos finally succeeded in delivering Egypt from the Assyrians and establishing the Twenty-sixth Dynasty with Sâis as his capital. Neitha was the chief divinity, and in her temple were recorded many of the maxims of Bokkoris the Wise. Here was the inscription so commonly referred to Isis, – doubtless the same goddess: "I am the All that was, that is and will be, and no mortal hath revealed me."

24. The tutelary gods had secret names which it was regarded as sacrilege to divulge. (See Exodus xx, 7; Judges xiii, 18.) "The arcane names fill the whole world" was a theurgic maxim. Proklos also remarks: "There is a sacred name which, with sleepless, dart-like motion, runs through the worlds, through the swift menace of the Father." Whether the name which Bitys revealed was occult like the mystic designation of Yava in the Semitic nations, is worth enquiry. The designation, Amun, for example, only means arcane or concealed, implying that it was not regarded as the real name of the divinity.

25. These were the propositions and theories put forth by various authors whose writings were indicated in the collection known as "Books of Hermes," or Tablets of Thoth.

26. Plutarch says: "They who imagine the mind to be part of the soul err no less than they who make the soul a part of the body: for the mind is as far superior to the soul as the soul is better and diviner than the body. The combination of the soul with the mind makes the logos or reasoning faculty, and with the body, passion, of which the latter is the principle of pleasure and pain, and the former of virtue and vice. Of these three, the earth has given the body, the moon the Soul, and the Sun, the mind. Every one of us is neither courage, nor fear, nor desire, no more than flesh or fluids, but the part by which we think and perceive. The soul, being molded and formed by the mind and itself molding and forming the body, by encompassing it on every side, receives from it impression and form."

Plato in the Timaeus likewise treats of the two souls or parts of the soul, the one mortal and the other immortal.

27. This phrase which translated literally would read "genesurgic motion," relates to those matters of the world of sense, which are under control of fate and circumstance,

and come within the province of chance and fortune.

28. This phrase, “that which is,” is very significant. It transcends the concept of existing and denotes real being, eternity itself. This shows the true meaning of Pope's declaration: “Whatever IS is right.” The Sanskrit term Satya, often rendered “truth,” has exactly the sense of Being, that which is enduring and permanent, absolute fact. Hence the maxim: “There is no dharma or supreme law superior to that which is.”

29. This work is lost. It was an explanation of the Pythagorean Symbology, and is quoted by Damaskios and Olympiodoros. Proklos restores some of the passages in his treatise upon the Platonic Theology, and also adopts the arguments. At the change of the Imperial Religion in the Fourth Century the books of the Philosophers were ordered to be destroyed on pain of death, and doubtless this work perished at that period.

30. In the divine world, nōesis is poesis – thinking is doing. What “God says” God is doing. All things are subject to mind, and to its behests. Mind, therefore, is the king of all things.

It was a theurgic saying, that by chants and sacrifices it was possible to revolutionize the realms of nature and generation.

31. There has been a great variety of opinion in regard to the descent of the soul. The book of Ecclesiastes has the sentence, “and the spirit to the God who gave it.” Nobody has said that it had been sent into perpetual exile. The //Chaldaean Oracle// declared “The Father placed symbols in the souls,” by which their identification is assured. When the Creator sends out a soul, he also calls it to himself again. The circle of necessity will return upon the Infinite. Such is the teaching of all philosophy.

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Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

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Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

Come, then, let us now endeavor, so far as we are able, to straighten the complicated problem in respect to the personal daemon, which is likewise made the theme for various objections. So, therefore, to speak plainly, the treatment of the subject in respect to the personal daemon is twofold, theurgic and technic: the one evoking him from the categories above, and the other from the visible periods in the world of generated existence. The former makes no use of the art of casting nativities, but the latter is devoted to such pursuits. The former pays honor to the daemon more generally as superior to the province of nature, but the latter specifically as pertaining to the realm of nature altogether. Hence thou seemest to have brought down strangely the most perfect sacred performance to regard as a mere human affair, and to have put thy

questions upon this subject as in a gymnastic exercise.

MODE OF QUESTIONING CRITICIZED.

So then, thou appearest to me to have cut off here only a very small part of the statement in relation to the personal daemon. For it is the custom of those who work by the rules of the art of vaticination in respect to the time of birth ¹ to summon him in a prescribed form from the decans and the risings of the constellations of the zodiac and likewise the stars; the sun also and the moon, and from the Bears ² and likewise from all the elements, ³ and from the world. It is not fair for thee thus to parcel out one very small part of the subject, "the Lord of the House," ⁴ and put questions simply in regard to that.

Here, in turn, thou askest in relation to one single subject under consideration (the personal daemon), "how the Lord of the House assigns it: according to what purpose, or what quality of emanation, or life, or power, comes from it to us." Thou also puttest the question in regard to "the calculating of nativities, whether it (the daemon) actually exists, or not," and in regard to the finding of the Lord of the House, "whether it is impossible or possible." What importance have these questions about the domination, in relation to the daemon? For it is evident that our knowing as to how he exists makes no difference in regard to such matters as his essence and cause. For in respect to things having an origin in the realm of nature, even though we do not chance to know, it happens all the same, that all and each of them have their own stability of essence in the universe. Thus, therefore, we will meet thy difficulties generally; but we will direct our attention specifically to what thou askest and endeavor in respect to them to give thee the solutions.

FATE AND THE PERSONAL DAEMON.

Thou also declarest that "the person who has learned the scheme of his nativity, and so knowing his own daemon, is liberated from fate, is truly favored by divinity." Thou dost not seem to me, however, to be saying these things altogether in harmony, either with themselves or with the truth. For if the daemon has been assigned to us from the scheme of nativity, and we may find him from that, how are we released from fate through the knowledge that the daemon was given to us according to fate? But if, as thou dost declare, we are really set free from necessity through the daemon, how was it allotted to us by Fate?

Hence the things now uttered by thee not only conflict with themselves, but they are also at variance with the truth; seeing that the personal daemon does not by any means come to every one by the scheme of his peculiar nativity. On the other hand, its origin, which we will hereafter set forth, was older than this. If, therefore, the daemon that comes down should be contemplated alone from that source, the individual who attained a knowledge of the daemon of his nativity, would by no means be happy or fortunate. Who, indeed, if in this case it were permitted to him, in order that he might accomplish the allotments from fate, would consent to receive the daemon as a guide to liberation from fate? Yet this appears to me as a part of the theory respecting the

daemon, and to be the last of the kind, but that the whole of his essence is passed over in silence by such a mode of investigation. Yet these things, although they are incorrectly stated, are, nevertheless, not utterly foreign to the subject.

The doubts, however, which thou bringest out in their order, in relation to “the enumeration of the Canons,” and in relation to “skill in calculating nativities,” that they are “beyond comprehension,” do not involve us in any controversy in relation to the subjects before us. For whether these arts are knowable or beyond comprehension, yet the aura or emanation from the stars brings the daemon to us, whether we our-selves are cognizant of it or not. The divine oracular art, ⁵ however, can teach us in relation to the stars as to that which is the truest, and, at any rate, we have no need of the enumeration of the canons, or of the art of divining.

ASTROLOGY EXPLAINED.

If, however, it is necessary, when dismissing these subjects, to say it, thou dost not seem to me right in what thou affirmest, namely: That it is impossible for expertness in astral observations ⁶ to amount to any actual knowing, for there is great disagreement in relation to it, and because Chæremón or somebody else has spoken against it.“ Indeed, by this mode of argument reasoning will be beyond comprehension. For all the sciences ⁷ have tens of thousands of persons disputing, and the matters of doubt in them have been innumerable. Hence, therefore, we are accustomed to say in opposition to those who are fond of disputing, that contradictory things create dissension even in things that are actually true, and that falsities are not alone in fighting one another. So, also, in regard to the mathematical science astrology, we may not only affirm that it is true, but also that those who err in respect to it contradict, knowing nothing in respect to the things that are really true. This happens, however, not only in relation to this science, but also in relation to all the sciences which are delivered from the gods to human beings. For as time is always going on, they are often intermingled with much that is of mortal origin, and the divine character of the knowledge becomes greatly obliterated. It is truly within, however, and though scanty, this sure evidence of the truth is nevertheless effectual for its preservation. When the signs of the measurement of the revolutions of the divine ones are clearly evident before the eyes, when they indicate beforehand the eclipses of the sun and moon, the enterings of the sun into the signs of the zodiac, and departures out of them, and the concurrent risings and settings of the moon with those of the fixed stars, the proof of actual sight is manifested agreeing with the prediction. And what is more, the observations of the heavenly bodies which have been preserved through all the period, both by the Chaldaeans ⁸ and by ourselves, bear witness together to the truth of this Science.

Demonstrations better known than these might be exhibited, if the discourse had been primarily upon these subjects. Nevertheless, as they are superfluous, and do not pertain to the recognition of the daemon, it is proper that I leave them out, and pass on to matters more appropriate than these.

THE PERSONAL DAEMON NOT DISCOVERED BY ASTROLOGY.

In thy epistle thou makest this statement “The assumption of the Lord of the House (or Lords of the House, if there are more than one) pertaining to a nativity, is almost confessed by astrologers themselves to be beyond absolute proving; and yet. it is from this assumption, they say, that the ascertaining of one's own personal daemon is possible.” How is the knowing of the Lord of the House to be acknowledged by them to be beyond comprehending, when they deliver clear methods in relation to its discovery, and likewise teach thoroughly the elementary principles for the determining of the disputed matters; some five, others more, and others fewer? ⁹ However, in order that we may get beyond this, let us proceed to examine a matter of more importance, the contingent attributes of both sides of the question. For, if it is possible to discover the Lord of the House pertaining to the nativity, the daemon that has been assigned from it is also knowable; and if the matter is out of reach, then, according to this hypothesis, we do not know him. Nevertheless, as there is a Lord of the House, there is also a daemon that has been assigned from him. What hinders, then, that while it may indeed be difficult to discover him through the calculating of the nativity, it may be easy to perceive him by means of sacred divination or theurgy?

In short, the daemon is not assigned by the Lord of the House only, but, on the other hand, there are many origins for him more universal than by the Lord of the House. ¹⁰ Still, however, such a method introduces an artificial and human procedure in regard to the personal daemon. Hence in these difficulties which thou hast suggested there is nothing wholesome.

TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE GUARDIAN DAEMON.

If, however, it is necessary to reveal to thee the true doctrine in relation to the personal daemon let me say this: It is not from one part in the sky, nor from any individual element of the objects that are visible, ¹¹ that he is assigned to us. But there is from the whole world and the various kinds of life in it, and the various kinds of body by which the soul comes down into the realm of generated existence, an allotted portion, all our own, divided among us to each of the distinctive qualities in us, which distribution is made according to the ruling disposition of each individual.

This daemon, therefore, is present as exemplar ¹² before the souls descend into the realm of generated existence. As soon as the soul chooses him for leader ¹³ the daemon immediately comes into charge of the completing of its vital endowments, and when it descends into the body, unites it with the body, and becomes the guardian of its common living principle. He likewise himself directs the private life of the soul, and whatever the conclusions we may arrive at by inference and reasoning, he himself imparts to us the principles. We think and do just such things as he brings to us by way of thought. He guides human beings thus continually till through the sacred theurgic discipline we shall obtain a god to be guardian and leader of the soul. For then he gives place to the superior, or delivers over the superintendence, or becomes subject, as a tributary, to him, or in some other way is servant to him as to an Overlord. ¹⁴

ONE GUARDIAN DAEMON ONLY TO AN INDIVIDUAL.

From these facts I may easily reply to your next question. For the personal daemon does not “preside over specific regions in us,” but simply over all at once. He pervades every principle about us, in the same manner as it was assigned from all the orders of intelligence in the universe. For it also seems proper to thee to remark as follows: “That there are daemons placed over specific departments of the body, one over health, one over the figure, and another over the bodily habits, forming a bond of union among them, and that one is placed as superior over all of them in common.” This very thing thou shouldst consider as proof that the authority over everything in us is vested in one daemon alone. Accordingly it is not right to define “one daemon as guardian of the body, another of the soul, and another of the mind.” For if the living person is one individual and the daemon manifold that is placed over him, the notion is absurd. Certainly the ruling powers everywhere are single rather than those that are ruled. But it is still more absurd if the many daemons ruling over special departments are not akin, but are to be classified apart from one another.

Thou also declarest that there are contradictory characters among them, saying that “some daemons are good and others bad.” Evil daemons have no allotment whatever as guardians, and they are never classified in opposition to the good, like one party against another, as though having equal importance.

THE GUARDIAN DAEMON NOT A "PART OF THE SOUL."

Having in succession abandoned these points, thou goest quickly over to the conjecture of the (Grecian) philosophy; yet in relation to the personal daemon thou overturnest the entire hypothesis. For if the daemon is “a part of the soul,” as, for instance, the spiritual or intellectible, ¹⁵ and “he who has a mind imbued with good sense is the truly favored one,” there will be no other order of beings, divine or daemonian, assuming authority over the human soul as being superior to it. Instead, there will be special parts of the soul, or some power existing separately supreme over the many forms of the life within us; and these, not as allied by nature, but as having been set apart as superior in their nature to our entire substance.

SEVERAL GUARDIAN DAEMONS.

After this thou callest to mind another statement in relation to the personal daemon, namely: that “some persons perform worship as to two, and others as to three of this class.” This, however, is all erroneous. For the classifying of the superior causes that are placed over us instead of including them in one, is a fallacious way of proceeding, and it goes completely astray from the unity which holds dominion in every-thing. The doctrine which apportions the daemon into parts in the body, or in the governing of the body, drags down its leadership to a very small point. What necessity, in such case, for those who entertain such an opinion, to regard sacred rites, the first principle of them being unsound?

There is, accordingly, one personal guardian daemon for every one of us. It is not right

to assume that it is common to everybody, or that it is common at all, but only that it is present with every individual as his own. For a distribution to every species, and the diversity existing in the realm of matter, do not admit of the union and identity of things essentially incorporeal.

Why is it, then, that the daemon “is invoked by all with a common form of invocation”? It is because their invocation is made through one divinity; the Lord of the daemons who from the beginning assigned to every one his personal daemon. ¹⁶ Even now also at the sacred rites he makes known to all and each their personal daemons, according to his own purpose. For always in the theurgic arrangement, the secondary are invoked through the superior divinities. In respect to the demons, therefore, one common leader of the cosmocrators, ¹⁷ in respect to the nativity, sends down to each and all, his personal daemon. Hence when the personal daemon is present he makes known his own proper worship and teaches the proper mode by which he is to be invoked.

ABOUT THE INVOKING OF GUARDIAN DAEMONS.

This arrangement is also acceptable to the daemons. One part of it is akin to the daemons that are invoked: another comes down from the more ancient categories: and the third makes a joint action from both the others. Do not, therefore, liken the invocations of gods with those to men, nor things not to be uttered with those that may be told; and do not compare the things that are prior to every limitation and every undefined mode, to those that have been defined by men or with indefinite arrangements. For these things that belong with us have nothing in common with those who are wholly superior to us in their entire race and order and rule the whole of our essence and nature.

Nevertheless, right here especially, the greatest failures occur to men when from human weakness, they infer anything in relation to the guardianship of the daemons: and when with things that are trivial, worthy of nothing, and in parts, they form a judgment of beings that are great, noteworthy and perfect.

This much we answer you in respect to the personal daemon in addition to what was said before.

Notes:

1. Greek, *phusis*. This term has a wide signification. It strictly means the passive or material principle, the originating power of the universe: but from that it has been used to denote the constitution of things, the peculiarity of sex, the bent of disposition, etc. Our author here employs the term as the female agency in production, contrasting it with the genesis. It thus signifies “birth” and has been rendered accordingly.

2. It has been remarked as an argument against the genuineness of this sentence, if not of the entire book, that the Egyptian astrologists did not have the Great and Little

Bear in their planisphere. Iamblichos, however, was a Syrian and conversant with Chaldaean and Grecian learning. Herodotus names the Bear as a northern constellation. See I, 148: V, 10.

3. This term has a somewhat indefinite signification. It is supposed accordingly by some to denote in this connection the planets, and by others, the signs in the zodiac.

4. Every sign of the zodiac was considered to have a "house" for its "lord," or ruling planet. In the Gospel according to Matthew a pun seems to be made on the term. "If they call the lord of the house Beel Zebul." This last name signifies "lord of the house."

5. Ficino renders this term "divine inspiration" in this place where it is contrasted with the art of casting nativities.

6. Greek, mathematical episteme, literally, skill in mathematics. But at the time when this work was written the term "mathematics" was employed to denote astrology, and accordingly it is so rendered.

7. Greek, epistamai. This term properly denotes knowledges of a superior character, which are comprehended by the noetic intelligence, instead of the dianoetic reasoning faculty. Hence it signifies what is above the common arts which are learned and classified, and so constitute what is in modern times designated "science" and "exact science."

8. The Aeon, or period, was reckoned as three hundred thousand years. Proklos, in his Commentary on the Timaeus, states that the Chaldaeans had records of observations of the stars which embraced entire cosmic cycles of time. Cicero, in his treatise on Divination, declares that they had records of the stars for the space of 370,000 years; and Diodoros the Sicilian asserts that their observation comprehended 470,000 years. As great antiquity was also claimed for the Egyptians. Kallisthenes when in Babylon sent the computations of the Chaldaeans to his uncle Aristotle.

9. "We say," says Hephæstion of Alexandria, "that a star which has five conditions anywhere in sight is a Lord of the House: in other words, if that star received the luminaries in their own boundaries, their own altitude, and their own triangle." He adds this condition: "if besides it has contiguity, emanation and configuration."

10. According to the Egyptian notion, every person received his guardian daemon at the hour of birth, and they looked no further. They regarded only the horoscope.

11. Greek, stoicheion. In later centuries of the Roman Empire, this term was used to signify planets and signs of the zodiac.

12. In other words the ideal or divine model after which the soul takes earthly form.

13. PLATO: Republic, X. Plato has outlined no distinction beyond choosing a mode of living, but here it is affirmed that the soul chooses a daemon of a superior order by its own intelligent volition.

14. One writer remarks: "A daemon is placed with every human being to be his initiator into the mysteries of life."

15. Menander says: "The mind is our daemon." The term was used with a variety of meanings at different times.

16. This seems to be at variance with Plato, who says: "The daemon will not receive you as his allotment, but you shall choose the daemon: the cause is in him who makes the choice, and the Deity is blameless."

17. Rulers of the cosmic world: the daemons allotted to the several regions of the universe. The term occurs in the Pauline Epistle to the Ephesians, vi, 12.

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Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

The last subject remaining for discussion is in relation to true success. ¹ Thou hast put intricate problems with regard to it, namely: first, observations upon certain subjects: next, matters of doubt: and after these, questioning. We will accordingly place thy questions in their order, each and every one of them, and will answer these in due course in reference to them.

Thou askest "whether there is not some other path to true success apart from the gods." ² What different way upward can there be, "entirely apart from the gods" that is reasonable? For if the essence and perfection of every good are comprised in the gods, and their primary power and authority are with us (priests), ³ and with those who are in like manner possessed by the superior divinities, and have come genuinely into union with them – and in short, if the source and end of goodness are earnestly pursued: in such case, there are present accordingly, the Spectacle of Truth and the initiation into spiritual knowledge. And with the knowing of the gods, the turning around to our own selves and the knowing of ourselves. follow together.

VARIOUS STATEMENTS CRITICISED.

To no purpose, therefore, thou proposest the doubt "whether it is necessary to pay any regard to human opinions." For what leisure has the person whose mind and thought are with the gods to look down for approval from human beings? Nor in what follows dost thou speak to the purpose: "whether the Soul does not now and then form grand conceptions." For what principle of fanciful creations has a place in those who have real being? Is not the faculty of imagination in us the former of eidola? But when the spiritual life is perfectly active, there is nothing of the imagination awakened. Does not the truth in its essence coexist with the gods? At least, is it not established with rational principles harmoniously? It is in vain, then, that thou and others whisper such things.

Nevertheless, these things about which certain mountebank priests and fortune-tellers calumniate those who minister at the worship of the gods, and thou hast spoken in the same way – are none of them at all connected with genuine theology and theurgy. Yet if, in some way, certain things of such a character shoot out as excrescences beside the knowledges of the things that are good, as evil arts sprout up with other arts, these very knowledges are actually more opposed by them than anything else. For that which is evil is more hostile to the good than to that which is not good.

CONCERNING NATURAL PRESENTIMENT.

I desire after this to go curiously over other remarks which misrepresent the divine foreknowledge. Thou comparest with it “other methods for obtaining premonitions of what will take place.” For to me, although a certain aptitude of nature aids in the signifying of what is to occur, just as the foreknowing of earthquakes, or of winds, or of storms happens to animals, it does not seem worthy of our veneration. For such an inborn faculty of divining accompanies acuteness of sense – or sympathy, or some other commotion of the natural faculties, and has nothing about it worshipful and supernatural. Nor if any one by human reasoning or systematic observation determines from symptoms those things of which the signs are indicative, as physicians from the systolê of the pulse prognosticate a coming fever, he by no means appears to me to possess anything honorable and good. For he likewise sets himself to it humanly, and infers logically by our reasoning faculty in relation to things which confessedly occur in the order of nature and he makes his diagnosis not very far away from the corporeal order of things. Accordingly, if there is in us any natural perception of the future, the faculty is clearly shown in activity as in everything else, but in having this nothing that is very happy is possessed. For what can there be of the qualities implanted in us by nature in the realm of generated existence that is a genuine, perfect and everlasting benefit?

THE DIVINE ENDOWMENT.

The divine endowment of divination ⁴ alone, therefore, being conjoined with the gods, imparts to us the divine life and likewise making us participants of the divine foreknowledge and the divine thoughts, renders us truly divine. It causes us to be genuinely the possessors of goodness, because the most blessed thought of the gods abounds with every good. Hence, “they who possess the endowment of divining,” do not, as you surmise, “foresee and are not really successful,” for all divine foreknowledge is seemingly good. Nor do they “foresee future events, and not know how to make use of the foresight properly for themselves.” On the contrary, with the foreknowledge, they receive beauty itself and order that are at once true and becoming, and there is with it that which is profitable. For the gods give them also the power of protecting themselves against direful calamities from the realm of nature: and when it is necessary to exercise courage and the uncertainty of the future contributes to this, they keep the things hidden that are to be, in order to make the soul better. Yet when uncertainty does not bring any help for this purpose, and the foreknowledge is advantageous to souls, for the sake of saving them and leading them upward, then the gods implant in their inmost beings the foreknowledge inherent in the inspired communications.

THE PATH TO TRUE SUCCESS.

But why am I prolonging these discourses? I have abundantly shown before by the many explanations which I have made in them, the superiority of the inspiration over human divination. Better, therefore, is what you ask from us: “To make plain to you the path to success, and in what the essence of it consists.” For from this the truth is then to be found, and all the difficulties may thus be at once easily resolved. I say, therefore, that the divine person gifted with intuition, having, in a former condition of being, been participant of the oneness, by the spectacle of the gods, comes at a later period to

another soul (or psychic condition) which is adjusted to the human ideal of figure, and through this becomes involved in the bond of Necessity and Fate. ⁵ Now then it is necessary to consider how he may be unloosed and set free from his bonds. There is no other way except the knowing of the gods. For the ideal or success is the apperceiving of the Good, just as the ideal of badness happens to be forgetting of what is good and deceit in relation to what is bad. The former, therefore, joins with the Divine nature: but the latter, an inferior destiny, is inseparable from the mortal. ⁶ The former seeks the intellectible essences by the sacred paths: ⁷ but the latter, having swerved from the first principles, yields itself to the measuring out of the ideals of the corporeal environment. The former is the knowing of the Father: ⁸ but the latter is the going aside from him and a forgetting of God, the Father, first in Essence and sufficient for himself. The former preserves the genuine life and brings it back to its Father, but the latter brings the man ruling in the realm of generated existence down to the world which is never permanent but always changing. ⁹

Let, then, this superior path to true success, which is the spiritual completing of the union of souls to the divine nature, be cognized by thee. But the sacerdotal and theurgic gift of true success is called the Door ¹⁰ to the Creator of the Universe, or Supreme Goodness. In the first place it possesses the power of chastity of soul which is far more perfect than chastity of the body: afterward, the preparing of the understanding for the participation and vision ¹¹ of the Good and its release from everything of a contrary character: and after these, oneness with the gods the givers of all things good.

RETURN OF THE SOUL TO DIVINITY.

After the theurgic discipline has conjoined the soul individually with the several departments of the universe, and with all the divine powers that pervade it, then it leads the soul to the Creator of the world, places it in his charge, and frees it of everything pertaining to the realm of matter, uniting it with the Sole Eternal Reason (Logos).

What I am saying is this: That it unites the soul individually to the One, Father of himself, self-moving. He who sustains the universe, spiritual, who arranges all things in order, who leads it to the supreme truth, to the absolute, the efficient, and other creative powers of God: thus establishing the theurgic soul in the energies, the conceptions and creative qualities of those powers. Then it inserts the soul in the entire Demurgic God.

This, with the Egyptian Sages, is the end of the "Return" as taught in the Sacred Records.

CONCERNING "THE GOOD."

The Good itself, they consider on the one side as absolute Divinity; the God subsisting before thought: but on the other as human, who is a unity with him. Bitys has explained this from the Hermaic Scrolls. This, therefore, is not "passed over" by the Egyptian priests, as thou dost suggest, but is handed down by them in a style worthy of the divine

being. Nor do the Theurgists “call upon the Divine Mind” in relation to “trivial matters,” but on the other hand it is in regard to matters appertaining to the purifying of the soul, its release and salvation. Nor do they “employ themselves diligently with things that are difficult: but of no use to human beings”; but on the contrary, such as are the most profitable of all to the soul. Nor are they imposed upon by a “vagabond” daemon, who have in every instance not only contended successfully with the deceitful daemonian nature, but have exalted themselves to the realm of mind and divinity.

Notes:

1. Greek, eudaimonia. This term was employed by Plato and Aristotle to denote true and complete happiness. Its derivation from eu or well, and daimôn, a divinity, a good genius, good fortune, indicates its true signification, as the condition favored by the good genius; hence, it denotes felicity, good fortune, prosperity, success-as being in favor with God and man.

2. Porphyry here refers to the gods that were invoked in the theurgic rites.

3. The Oracle had, before the time of Porphyry, assigned to the Egyptian priests the finding of the path to felicity. Hence Herodotus declared them the first to institute the Sacred Rites.

4. Greek, mantike, the art of divining: prophecy, inspiration. This is the term which has been generally translated as divination. But divination as described by Grecian writers was the same as prophecy, and implied intimate communion with divinity.

5. This is a similar account of that given by Plato in the Phaedros. The souls while in the eternal region are described as beholding the thea or vision of the gods, and accompanying them in their journey in their planetary orbits in the sky, having been initiated and become epoptai or Beholders of the Mysteries of that world. This, the philosopher explains, was “while we possessed our nature in its entirety and did not suffer the molestations of evil which were awaiting us in the future time, when we were free and not invested with the body to which we are bound as an oyster to the shell.” After this came the “descent into the realm of generated existence,” and investiture with the “mortal soul” and its conditions. See Timaeus and Plutarch's treatise on The Face in the Orb of the Moon, 28.

6. PLATO: Theatetus 84, Sokrates. “It is not possible that evil should be destroyed; for it is necessary that there should be always something contrary to good; nor can it be seated among the gods, but of necessity moves around this mortal nature and this region. Wherefore we ought to fly hence as quickly as possible; and this flight consists in being assimilated to God as much as possible, and this assimilating is the becoming just and holy with wisdom.”

7. By the Sacred or hieratic paths, Abammon evidently means the theurgic discipline. The ancient Oriental faiths all made the service of the guru, or spiritual teacher, an essential in the matter of knowing the truth.

8. Compare Gospel according to John, xvii, 3: “This is the eternal life (the life of the eternal world), namely: that they know thee the God only true.”

9. The philosopher Herakleitos held that “change” is the “only persisting” condition of things. He taught that the Supreme Being is fire – not mere physical heat, but an aetherial principle; and that it acted on matter producing motion and creative activity.

10. In the former years of the nineteenth century there arose a teacher in Persia, who was designated the “Bab” – gate or door. He promulgated a mystic doctrine somewhat in analogy to that of the Sufis, with many features of the later Platonism and Gnosticism and Parsism Zoroastrianism. He was afterward executed, but his disciples still constitute a numerous body.

11. Greek thea, a vision, contemplation. The term is used to signify the Spectacle exhibited at Initiatory Rites.

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Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries By Iamblichos

These many things we have answered thee as we best were able in relation to the doubts and difficulties which thou hast discovered in relation to the divine art of divination and theurgy. It now remains with the end of these discourses that I pray the gods to bestow upon me and thee, the unchanging safeguard of true conceptions: and likewise to implant in us forever the everlasting truth, and to provide for us a participation of more perfect conceptions in relation to the divine beings: for in these the most blessed consummation of all things good is set before us, and the confirmation of the hearty friendship which now exists between us.

FINIS

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Were George Washington and Thomas Jefferson Jesus Mythicists?
by D.M. Murdock/Acharya S

Did the American Founding Fathers study the case for Jesus Christ being a mythical figure? There is much evidence that Washington and Jefferson, among other famous and important figures of the day, were influenced by well-known French mythographers and "Jesus mythicists," such as Dupuis and Volney.

"The fable of Christ and his twelve apostles...is a parody of the sun and the twelve signs of the Zodiac, copied from the ancient religions of the Eastern world.... Every thing told of Christ has reference to the sun. His reported resurrection is at sunrise, and that on the first day of the week; that is, on the day anciently dedicated to the sun, and from thence called Sunday..."

Thomas Paine, The Complete Religious and Theological Works of Thomas Paine (382)

"...the day will come when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the supreme being as his father in the womb of a virgin will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter."

Thomas Jefferson, The Adams-Jefferson Letters (594)

Over the decades I have been researching the subject of the origins of Christianity, as well as religion and mythology in general, I have come across many astonishing facts that I have passionately worked to bring to light for the enjoyment of others. Along with this work has been the development of a history for what is called "mythicism," which in this context specifically refers to the study of various biblical characters, such as Jesus

Christ, as mythical and not historical figures.

In this quest to bring forth and help develop mythicism or the "mythicist position," I have studied numerous primary sources in multiple languages from antiquity, as well as the writings of brilliant visionaries and credentialed authorities of the modern era. One of the juiciest tidbits I have ever uncovered on this quest is the evidence that at least a couple of the American Founding Fathers appear to have entertained the ideas of Jesus mythicism, although this contention seems to have been omitted from the historical record as much as is possible, for obvious reasons, perhaps.

"Some of the most famous early Americans may have considered Jesus Christ to have been a myth."

Washington and Jefferson immortalized at Mt. Rushmore is a fascinating concept that some of the most famous early Americans may have considered Jesus Christ to have been a myth, but there are intriguing indications that it is true, at least in part or at certain times. In this regard appears the following astounding quote, which suggests that first and third American Presidents George Washington (1732-1799) and Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) were closet mythicists!

In Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country (290), an article entitled "Virginia, First and Last" states:

The English Church at an early day in the history of Virginia gained for itself general odium: it levied heavy taxes on all who did not attend the ministrations of the ingeniously dull men whom England sent to colonial pulpits; it persecuted and taxed dissent heavily; and, worst of all, it opposed the revolution bitterly and to the last. Washington himself would have incurred popular distrust had he occupied that pew in the Pohick church. The result was, that so soon as the independence was gained, the English Church sank away, and the State was overrun with all manner of orthodox dissenters. From these the leading men took refuge in scepticism. Washington even was glad to have Volney as his guest at Mount Vernon, and Jefferson occupied his Sundays at Montecello in writing letters to Paine (they are unpublished, I believe, but I have seen them), in favour of the probabilities that Christ and his twelve apostles were only personifications of the sun and the twelve signs of the zodiac. If there was a believer among them all, I do not know his name.

The pertinent part of this eye-popping quote bears repeating:

"Washington even was glad to have Volney as his guest at Mount Vernon, and Jefferson occupied his Sundays at Montecello in writing letters to Paine..., in favour of the probabilities that Christ and his twelve apostles were only personifications of the sun and the twelve signs of the zodiac."

The author of these revealing contentions refers to Count Volney, a famous French traveler, philosopher, writer and "Jesus mythicist" of the 18th to 19th centuries, as well as to the Anglo-American philosopher, writer and "Lost Founder" Thomas Paine

(1737-1809). One must wonder if these important letters were left unpublished because they contained what might be perceived as "dangerous" information? Where are these purported letters? Do they exist, or have they been destroyed?

Rev. Dr. Moncure Daniel Conway

Moncure Daniel Conway; Library of Congress This article about the State of Virginia was republished in *Littell's Living Age* (no. 1088/8 April, 1865; p. 12), edited by Eliakim Littell. The author is not identified in either place, but the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Publications* (173) does identify him as Rev. Dr. Moncure Daniel Conway (1832-1907), a Harvard Divinity School graduate, minister, prominent abolitionist and friend of Charles Darwin, among other luminaries. Dr. Conway was also a well-known and foremost expert on Thomas Paine, having pored over the latter's writings and correspondence, and composed a two-volume, oft-cited biography about him.

The fact that Conway's name does not appear in either *Fraser's* or *Living Age* possibly indicates his reticence in being associated with this potentially dangerous information. Yet, the article is long and full of markers that expose his true identity—including the fact that he claims to have seen these letters personally, a privilege undoubtedly reserved for the few, such as those in Conway's position. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to believe that this respectable individual was behaving mendaciously, and, with the indications revealed here, we may logically conclude that Conway did not fabricate these letters or engage in "rhetoric" concerning their content.

Verifying the first contention in the "Virginia" article--and that he is the author of same--in *Barons of the Potomack and the Rappahannock* (182), Conway writes about Volney:

In the last century a wayfarer appeared in some of the Virginia villages and was hospitably received, on the strength of a note he bore in the following words:

"The historian and philosopher Volney needs no recommendation from--G. Washington."

The implication here is that the mysterious and controversial Count had been introduced to American society by none other than George Washington himself. Volney, Dupuis and Napoleon

Constantin François de Chasseboeuf (1757-1820), also known as "Count Volney," was a professor of history and the author of the classic early mythicist work *The Ruins of Empires*, originally written in French. Like his fellow French mythographer, college professor and early mythicist writer Charles Dupuis (1742-1809), Volney was also a tutor of French leader Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), who made him a senator and a count.

Charles Dupuis, French mythographer Unearthing fascinating facts concerning ancient religion and mythology, one of the academician Dupuis's major views in his multivolume work *Origine de tous les cultes ou religion universelle* (1795) or *Origin of All Religious*

Worship can be summarized as follows:

The existence of Christ, the restorer..., cannot be accepted as a historical fact... With a single blow we shall destroy the follies of the general public and those of the new philosophes, and at the same time we shall strip Christ of his two natures. The public takes him for a god and a man together; the contemporary philosophe takes him for a man only. We shall certainly not take him for a god, and even less for a man. (Bietenholz, 327)

In this same regard, Volney remarked:

There are absolutely no other monuments of the existence of Jesus Christ as a human being, than a passage in Josephus..., a single phrase in Tacitus..., and the Gospels. But the passage in Josephus is unanimously acknowledged to be apocryphal, and to have been interpolated towards the close of the third century... the existence of Jesus is no better proved than that of Osiris and Hercules... (Volney 1849, 118)

In *The Ruins*, speaking as a Buddhist lama refuting Christian claims of Buddhism plagiarizing from Christianity, Volney states:

Prove to us now...that the man whom you make the author of your sect is not [Buddha] himself disfigured. Prove to us by historical facts that he even existed at the epoch you pretend; for it being destitute of authentic testimony, we absolutely deny it... (Volney 1853, 113)

Volney's section in *Ruins* on Jesus (172) is entitled:

Christianity or the allegorical worship of the Sun under the cabalistical names of Christen or Christ and Yes-us or Jesus

Thus, Dupuis and Volney's thesis was that Christ was a mythical figure based on the sun.

"It is quite a big question, whether Jesus Christ has ever lived."

Christopher Martin Wieland and Napoleon BonaparteSo influential were Dupuis and Volney that in 1808 at Weimar, Germany, Napoleon remarked into the ear of a German writer, Christopher Martin Wieland (1733-1813): "By the way, it is quite a big question, whether Jesus Christ has ever lived." (Bietenholz, 326)

In this regard, it is contended that Napoleon's "Commission" to Egypt (1798-1801) was inspired by Dupuis's work, with the desire to find evidence of the religion and mythology that influenced Christianity leading to the discovery of the Rosetta Stone. (Knight, 679)

Moreover, when Napoleon returned from Egypt he reinstated Catholicism, at which point he was castigated by Dupuis, to whom he responded that "as for himself, he did not believe that such a person as Jesus Christ ever existed; but as the people were

inclined to superstition, he thought proper not to oppose them." We are further told that Dupuis informed Paine and Chancellor Livingston of Napoleon's remarks. (Theoanthr., 150)

Like Volney, and completing the circle, Paine also met with Napoleon, who was so enthralled with the philosopher that the emperor "declared that a statue of gold ought to be erected to him in every city in the universe..." (Linton, 53)
Volney and Franklin

Benjamin Franklin; oil portrait by David Martin, 1767; White House
Unsurprisingly considering the exalted company he kept, but highly interesting nonetheless, Volney was also friends with American Founding Father Dr. Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), a known irreverent rabblouser whom the Count encountered in France:

At Madame Helvétius's home at Auteuil, he met Benjamin Franklin, then ambassador of the new United States to France, who decisively influenced his views on morality and introduced him to the next ambassador, Thomas Jefferson. (Leopold, 9)

Here we learn that the young Volney had made the acquaintance of not only Franklin, sometime between 1776 and 1780, but also Thomas Jefferson, before the Count traveled to America. In Volney's subsequent correspondence with Franklin (Wilson, 306), the two evidently discussed philosophy, but Volney's book on mythicism was not published until one year after Franklin's death.

"Lighthouses are more useful than churches."

Baptized a Puritan, Franklin adopted Deism as a young man, declaring in his autobiography, "I soon became a thorough Deist." (Franklin 1834, 23) Although he was a spiritual theist who believed in "the Deity" and who encouraged humanity to worship and pray, Franklin himself did not subscribe to organized religion, once remarking, "Lighthouses are more useful than churches." In consideration of his friendship with Volney and Paine, et al., one wonders whether or not Franklin too was at the very least a "rational Unitarian," as appears to have been somewhat common among Deists.
Voltaire and Bolingbroke

At the same salons where he had encountered Franklin, Volney also met one of his namesakes, famed French philosopher Voltaire. (Linton, x) Born François-Marie Arouet, the pseudonymous Voltaire himself was certainly aware of the Christ-myth thesis, having once written (273):

"I saw some disciples of Bolingbroke..., who denied the existence of a Jesus..."

François-Marie Arouet, aka Voltaire; oil by Catherine Lusurier; Musée national du Château et des Trianons
Voltaire is referring to the English philosopher Henry Saint John, the Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751). In identifying Bolingbroke's Deist disciples as Jesus mythicists, Voltaire has traced back this school of thought to before the time of Dupuis. Certainly, these Deists were likewise not the first mythicists. Despite knowing

about the mythicist position, Voltaire evidently retained his perception of a historical Jesus in order to run down the latter's character, which he could not do if Christ were a myth. (Bietenholz, 325)

The fact that Bolingbroke's work had been translated into French by one of Ben Franklin's good friends, Barbeu Dubourg, is yet another intriguing connection that may indicate Franklin's awareness of mythicism as well. (Franklin 1905, 17)

Deism, Unitarianism, Evemerism and Mythicism

Achieving prominence during the 17th and 18th centuries as part of the "Age of Enlightenment," Deism is a religious viewpoint that does not deny God's existence but that avers "the Creator" can be perceived through nature and reason, while remaining aloof from creation, not interfering in the matters of men or suspending natural laws. The word comes from the Latin "deus," which means "God" and which was previously used interchangeably with the Greek term "theos," likewise meaning "God."

"A number of the Founding Fathers had been exposed to ancient mythology and were disinclined to believe in the miracles of the Bible, including parts of the gospel story."

A number of the Founding Fathers were classically educated and knew much about the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, and it is claimed that, like Franklin, several others were Deists, rather than orthodox Christians. Thus, they had been exposed to ancient mythology and were disinclined to believe in the miracles of the Bible, including parts of the gospel story.

Athena springs from the mind of Zeus; Phrynos Painter, c. 560-550 BCE; University of Haifa Library It appears that some of these individuals were also sympathetic to the idea of Unitarianism as well, the "nontrinitarian" ideology that denies the Triune nature of God in favor of a divine Unity. During this period in history, Unitarians espoused what is called "rationalist unitarianism," which essentially rejects the miracles and mythical motifs of Christianity, such as the virgin birth, as reflected in Jefferson's quote about Minerva (Athena) and Jupiter (Zeus).

This perspective of removing the fabulous fairytales in order to find a "real person" underneath is also known as "euhemerism" or "evemerism," after the ancient Greek philosopher Euhemerus or Evemeris (4th cent. BCE), who posited that the gods and legendary figures of old were in fact kings, queens and other heroes who were deified after death, having supernatural and miraculous motifs added to their mundane biographies.

The contention that at least some Deists subscribed to the mythicist position as well is verified by Voltaire's comments about Bolingbroke's disciples. Indeed, these ideas all seem to have coalesced at various times in the views of certain Founding Fathers, some of whom were apparently intrigued by mythicism, such as Washington, Jefferson, Paine and possibly others acquainted with Volney.

Volney and Washington

Bust of Constantin-François Volney; Salle du serment du jeu de paume, Versailles; photo by Philippe Dessanteln 1795, Count Volney traveled to the United States with the intention of settling in America, and was welcomed by President George Washington personally. At his meeting with Washington, Volney recounted to the amazement of the Americans the exact moves of Napoleon's military campaigns as they were happening, proving that he knew the French leader well. (Wilson, 306)

The famed globetrotter Volney's travel guides to the East could be found in Washington's private library. (Longmore, 221) Also listed in the catalogue of the Washington Collection at the Boston Athenaeum is Volney's letter to the hostile American theologian Rev. Dr. Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), regarding a derisive pamphlet the minister had written against Volney's work. (Griffin, 217)

The Athenaeum collection, which comprises part of Washington's library from his home at Mount Vernon, also contains Priestley's various letters to Volney in rebuttal. (Griffin, 170) The presence of these letters in his library demonstrates that Washington was aware of this controversy, which significantly swirled around Volney's mythicism, as concerned his "conflating the God of Moses with pagan gods." (Scholfield, 377) Moreover, in the history section of the Athenaeum collection we discover that Washington also possessed a copy of Volney's *The Ruins of Empires*, in which the controversial thesis of Jesus mythicism is laid plain. (Griffin, 515)

"Washington possessed a copy of Volney's *The Ruins of Empires*, in which the controversial thesis of Jesus mythicism is laid plain."

In consideration of these facts, it is probable that Washington was cognizant of Volney's arguments in favor of mythicism, even if he did not embrace them fully or publicly. Jefferson and Priestly

For many years, it has been contended that Thomas Jefferson was a Deist, if not an atheist, although there are no writings in his own hand making such claims. Jefferson did, however, label himself a Unitarian, and he was so skeptical of many parts of the gospel story that he took a razor and literally cut out these unbelievable miraculous, mystical and magical scriptures, leaving a much thinner book. This "Jefferson Bible," as it is known, is based on Jesus's "principles of a pure deism," a task that the American statesman had originally asked Rev. Priestley to do. In his letter to Priestley of April 9, 1803, Jefferson mentions "Pythagoras, Epicurus, Epictetus, Socrates, Cicero, Seneca, Antoninus" and speaks of Jesus as historical figure, albeit one who has been evermeristically mythologized. (Jefferson 1854, 475-476)

Joseph Priestley; Rembrandt Peale, 1801 Priestly was an influential Unitarian minister, a denomination that in Jefferson's time stripped away the miraculous and focused on Jesus the compassionate man, the same position Jefferson took in his Bible. The minister, who had assailed Volney over his mythicism, was convinced not only that Jesus had existed as a historical figure but also that he had essentially been a Unitarian, like Priestley himself, who set out to prove this premise in his book about Christ.

Jefferson, Volney and Adams

Having met in France, between 1790 and 1806 Jefferson and Volney corresponded at least 30 times, which is prolific in consideration of the awkwardness and inconvenience of the medium of the day. During his sojourn in America between 1795 and 1798, Volney visited Jefferson at Monticello. (Leopold, 4) In this regard, in his letter of June 12, 1796 to then-Colonel James Monroe (1758-1831), fifth President of the United States and author of the Monroe Doctrine, Jefferson casually remarks, "Volney is with me at present. He is on his way to the Illinois." (Jefferson 1829, 335) Volney needs no introduction to Monroe, and it is obvious that he is well known among the American elite of the time.

"Volney is with me at present."

A week later (6/17/1796), Jefferson wrote to the Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), who had been a general under Washington in the Revolutionary War and whose whereabouts Jefferson had learned from "M. Volney, now with me" (still). (Jefferson 1829, 338) One wonders what engrossing conversations the two may have engaged in at that time.

John Adams; Samuel Finley Breese Morse, 1816 Despite Volney having friends in such high places, in 1798 second American President John Adams (1735-1826), evidently influenced by Priestley and others, was able to drive the "infidel" Volney from America, allegedly out of "unmanly revenge," labeling the French count an "atheist, an ignoramus, a Chinese and a Hottentot." (St. John, 236) In view of such treatment of nonbelievers, it may be understood why interest in mythicism has not been overtly declared by the erudite and elite such as are discussed here.

Volney returned to France, where he associated with Madison, through whom Jefferson continued corresponding to the Frenchman, and in a letter of 1804 to James Monroe, President Jefferson mentions his close relationship with the Count. Jefferson's role in this scandalous "French Connection" did not go unnoticed, however, as he too was castigated: "Federalists attacked Jefferson as a 'howling atheist' and infidel, claiming that his attraction to the religious and political extremism of the French Revolution disqualified him from public office." ("Thomas Jefferson and religion")
Jefferson's Volney Collection

Thomas Jefferson In 1805, Jefferson wrote to Volney that he had received the Count's latest work, a travel guide, which the American President had read and "deposited in the Congressional library." Further demonstrating his knowledge of Volney's work, in 1815 Jefferson sold as part of his collection to Congress a copy of the English translation of Volney's *The Ruins*, published in 1796--the same year Volney visited Jefferson at Monticello.

In fact, Jefferson himself evidently translated into English the first 20 chapters of *Ruins*, with Joel Barlow finishing the rest, which was published in 1802. (Linebaugh, 410; Gaustad, 35) Adding further intrigue to this tale, Jefferson allegedly asked Volney later

to burn his manuscript (Linebaugh, 410), but it appears that instead the translation was simply attributed to Barlow, possibly in order to keep the third President out of what could have been a scandalous affair.

Indeed, as Steven Blakemore (261) states:

Jefferson began a translation of the book but upon becoming president, he realized that he could not complete it and, for political reasons, he did not want to be identified as the translator.

"...the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion."

Volney translator Joel Barlow (1750-1812) himself was a American statesman well known for drafting the Islam-appeasing Treaty of Tripoli, in which it was written that "the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion."

"[Volney's] ideas are similar to those represented in Jefferson's writing of the Declaration of Independence and the statute of Virginia for religious freedom."

Volney's Ruins of Empires, 1811 Speaking of the philosophical views in Volney's Ruins, the Library of Congress (2/24/2000) remarks, "These ideas are similar to those represented in Jefferson's writing of the Declaration of Independence and the statute of Virginia for religious freedom."

Like Washington, Jefferson also had in his collection the commentary by Priestley on Volney's mythicism, revealing he also knew about that debate, which might explain any evident reticence on his part about jumping into this intellectual fray, an apparent factor in the introduction of the "alien bills" Adams had used to expel the French mythicist. In consideration of the hostility from the highest office of the land, it is understandable if these gentlemen did not commit to writing much of their personal conversations about religion.

In any event, it is clear from Jefferson's lengthy and enthusiastic correspondence with Volney about a wide variety of subjects, including travel, geography, weather, food, health, languages, politics and philosophy, as well as personal matters such as the state of his home, that he found the latter's writings to be stimulating, that his fondness for the man was unaffected by Adams's actions against him and that he was unphased by Volney's mythicism, about which he clearly knew.
Jefferson, Paine and Jesus as the Sun

If Conway's remarks are true--and we have little reason to believe otherwise--at some point and likely under the influence of Volney (and Dupuis), as well as the "militant Deist" Paine, Jefferson discussed with the latter the possibility of Jesus and his disciples representing the sun and the twelve signs of the zodiac.

Thomas Paine; oil by Auguste Millière (1880), after an engraving by William Sharp, after a portrait by George Romney (1792)As early as 1793, Jefferson was aware that Paine

was critical of the gospel story, as in a letter of that year to Jefferson, U.S. Minister to France Gouverneur Morris informs him that Paine is in prison, "where he amuses himself with publishing a pamphlet against Jesus Christ." (Lawrence, 111) The pamphlet to which Morris refers, the first part of *The Age of Reason*, is a deistic tract that takes a typical evermerist position of Jesus being a "virtuous and amiable man" (Paine 1852, 14). In that same writing, Paine refers repeatedly to "Christian mythology" and "Christian mythologists." (E.g., Paine 1852, 12)

It seems that, particularly after the publication of *The Ruins*, Paine became increasingly inclined towards mythicism, as displayed in his later work on Freemasonry, which was an essay to be included in the third part of his *Age of Reason* but which was not published until 1818, nine years after his death.

"The Christian religion and Masonry have one and the same common origin, both are derived from the worship of the sun."

As he had done in his letter of 1806 to Andrew A. Dean (quoted above), in his "Origins of Free-Masonry" Paine likewise equated Jesus with the sun:

The Christian religion and Masonry have one and the same common origin, both are derived from the worship of the sun; the difference between their origin is, that the Christian religion is a parody on the worship of the sun, in which they put a man whom they call Christ in the place of the sun, and pay him the same adoration which was originally paid to the sun, as I have shown in the chapter on the origin of the Christian religion. (Paine, 324)

George Washington as Freemason In this regard, George Washington himself was a Mason (Mulsow, 193), as was Benjamin Franklin (Popkin, 50). There is no official record of Thomas Jefferson being a Mason, but he was surrounded by Masons in his family and as business and political associates, and he attended a number of Masonic meetings and ceremonies at various lodges. (Beless) It is therefore likely that all three men were familiar with the doctrine outlined by Paine.

In the paragraph above comparing Jesus with the sun, Paine's last sentence has an asterisk (*) on it that reads: "Not published," in reference to the aforementioned chapter concerning Christian origins. One wonders what the chapter contained that prevented it from being published; it is likely from all this evidence that it was something in line with the works of Dupuis and Volney, i.e., mythicism.

Not content with censoring the Christian origins chapter, the entire paragraph was also omitted from Paine's Freemasonry pamphlet published posthumously by Madame Bonneville in 1810, undoubtedly for fear of offending the masses. As American historian Dr. Bruce Kuklick writes (xxiii), "In a time of religious retrenchment in the United States, Paine's theology became a matter of censure." In this same vein, when in 1802 Paine went to publish his third part of *Age of Reason* along with a response to a prominent churchman who had assailed his work, Jefferson requested him not to do so. (Morais, 126)

It is therefore easy to understand why any letters from Jefferson to Paine regarding this taboo subject would go unpublished--or be destroyed.

"A couple of decades later, popular English minister Robert Taylor was imprisoned for being a mythicist."

Any fears about censure--or worse--would have been well founded, however, as was discovered a couple of decades later, when popular English minister Robert Taylor was imprisoned for saying essentially the same thing, i.e., for being a mythicist.
Robert Taylor and Charles Darwin

One of Dupuis and Volney's later devotees was Rev. Robert Taylor, author of 'The Diegesis' Rev. Dr. Robert Taylor (1784-1844), whose mistreatment under England's "blasphemy" laws badly frightened the budding evolutionist and Conway friend Dr. Charles Darwin as to his own potential fate. Taylor was notoriously arrested, tried and convicted for publicly calling into question the veracity of the Bible and Christian tradition, preaching from the pulpit that Christ was a mythical figure. He served two prison sentences in the late 1820s and early 1830s for a total of three years, during which time he defiantly wrote two mythicist works, *The Syntagma* and *The Diegesis*. If Darwin was aware of Taylor's fate, he was likely also knowledgeable about what the minister had been preaching: To wit, Jesus Christ was a mythical not historical figure, based on pre-Christian solar mythology.

"Such ill treatment may indicate why so little mythicism has made it into the public view, with questioners of the 'historical Jesus' treated as pariahs in both the public at large and the hallowed halls of academia."

Such ill treatment may indicate why so little mythicism has made it into the public view, even to this day, with questioners of the evidence for the "historical Jesus" and propounders of mythical parallels treated as pariahs in both the public at large and the hallowed halls of academia. However, as we can see from this fascinating story, there is more to the picture than meets the eye, and the question of Jesus's historicity has been on the minds of many of the greatest and most influential thinkers of all time.
The Sun of Righteousness, Valentinus and the Zodiac

The hypothesis by various erudite notables that Christ was the sun and his 12 apostles were the signs of the zodiac has a long and venerable history, beginning in the early Christian period, extending throughout later tradition. Indeed, perceiving Jesus as the "Sun of Righteousness" was based on the scripture at Malachi 4:2, the biblical book immediately preceding the Gospel of Matthew:

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings...

This tradition of solar imagery within Christianity has continued abundantly to the present day.

Building on the precedent of the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria and the Jewish historian Josephus, both of whom equated the 12 Tribes of Israel with the 12 signs of the zodiac, early Christians and Gnostics did likewise with the 12 apostles.

For example, in the early third century, Church father Clement of Alexandria (Excerpts from Theodotus 1.25.2) reported on the doctrine of the Valentinian Gnostic Theodotus (fl. 150-180 AD/CE):

He says the apostles were substituted for the twelve signs of the zodiac, for, as birth is directed by them, so is rebirth by the apostles. (Hegedus, 324)

As theologian Rev. Dr. Tim Hegedus remarks in *Early Christianity and Ancient Astrology* (343):

"[The] twelve apostles have taken over the role of guardian...of the zodiacal signs that had traditionally been held by the twelve [Olympian] gods."

Miniature zodiac, with Helios (Sun) as Christ, surrounded by the apostles, corresponding to the zodiacal signs; 813-820 AD/CE; Vaticanus graecus 1291

This correlation continued throughout early Christianity into the Middle Ages, as evidenced by imagery of Jesus as the central sun surrounded by his 12 as the zodiac, discussed by famed churchman the Venerable Bede, for one, in the seventh century:

In England the Venerable Bede, 673-735, substituted the eleven apostles for eleven of the early signs, as the *Corona seu circulus sanctorum Apostolorum*, John the Baptist fitly taking the place of Aquarius to complete the circle. (Allen, 6)

The astrotheological imagery within the Bible and Christianity is abundant and can be discussed at length, as have I done in my books.

In view of all these factors, it is evident that some of the most brilliant minds and greatest visionaries in history have entertained, if not been convinced by, the idea of Jesus Christ being a mythical figure, based significantly on Pagan mythology that revolves around the sun. It is also obvious that the public expression of such mythicism, whether verbal or written, could bring down the persecutory wrath of the reigning authorities, which explains why this amazing and important history is not more widely known. Until today...

Further Reading

What is a Mythicist?

A Brief History of Mythicism

Jesus as the Sun throughout History

The Christ Myth Anthology

Thomas Jefferson and religion

(Interview with D.M. Murdock below starts at 22:00 in)

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- Pliny, Tacitus and Suetonius: No Proof of Jesus
- The Problem of Religion
- Rebuttal to Dr. Chris Forbes concerning 'Zeitgeist, Part 1'
- Is the Shroud of Turin Real?
- Is Suetonius's Chrestus a Reference to Jesus?
- Sun Lore of All Ages
- Suns of God Review | Danny McNeal
- Suns of God Review | Dr. Robert M. Price
- Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity | A Review by D.M. Murdock | Marguerite

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- Was Krishna Born of a Virgin? | Devaki
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- ZEITGEIST Sourcebook (PDF)
- Les origines du christianisme et la recherche pour Jésus le Christ historique
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"I find myself in full agreement with Acharya S/D.M. Murdock... I find it undeniable that...many, many of the epic heroes and ancient patriarchs and matriarchs of the Old Testament were personified stars, planets and constellations..." —Dr. Robert M. Price, *The Pre-Nicene New Testament*

"I can recommend your work whole-heartedly!" —Dr. Robert Eisenman, *James the Brother of Jesus and The New Testament Code*, RobertEisenman.com

"Acharya S deserves to be recognized as a leading researcher and an expert in the field

of comparative mythology, on a par with James Frazer or Robert Graves—indeed, superior to those forerunners in the frankness of her conclusions and the volume of her evidence." —Barbara Walker, *The Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets and Man Made God*

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"Ms. Murdock is one of only a tiny number of scholars with the richly diverse academic background (and the necessary courage) to adequately address the question of whether Jesus Christ truly existed as a walking-talking figure in first-century Palestine."

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The Jesus Forgery: Josephus Untangled
by Acharya S/D.M. Murdock
Josephus

The following article is excerpted from:

Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled

suns of god

When addressing the mythical nature of Jesus Christ, one issue repeatedly raised is the purported "evidence" of his existence to be found in the writings of Flavius Josephus, the famed Jewish general and historian who lived from about 37 to 100 CE. In Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews* appears the notorious passage regarding Christ called the "Testimonium Flavianum" ("TF"):

"Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works,--a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day." (Whitson, 379)

This surprisingly brief and simplistic passage constitutes the "best proof" of Jesus's existence in the entire ancient non-Christian library comprising the works of dozens of historians, writers, philosophers, politicians and others who never mentioned the great sage and wonderworker Jesus Christ, even though they lived contemporaneously with or shortly after the Christian savior's purported advent.

A False Witness

Despite the best wishes of sincere believers and the erroneous claims of truculent apologists, the Testimonium Flavianum has been demonstrated continually over the centuries to be a forgery, likely interpolated by Catholic Church historian Eusebius in the fourth century. So thorough and universal has been this debunking that very few scholars of repute continued to cite the passage after the turn of the 19th century. Indeed, the TF was rarely mentioned, except to note that it was a forgery, and numerous books by a variety of authorities over a period of 200 or so years basically took it for granted that the Testimonium Flavianum in its entirety was spurious, an interpolation and a forgery. As Dr. Gordon Stein relates:

"...the vast majority of scholars since the early 1800s have said that this quotation is not by Josephus, but rather is a later Christian insertion in his works. In other words, it is a forgery, rejected by scholars."

So well understood was this fact of forgery that these numerous authorities did not spend their precious time and space rehashing the arguments against the TF's authenticity. Nevertheless, in the past few decades apologists of questionable integrity and credibility have glommed onto the TF, because this short and dubious passage represents the most "concrete" secular, non-biblical reference to a man who purportedly shook up the world. In spite of the past debunking, the debate is currently confined to those who think the TF was original to Josephus but was Christianized, and those who credulously and self-servingly accept it as "genuine" in its entirety.

To repeat, this passage was so completely dissected by scholars of high repute and standing--the majority of them pious Christians--that it was for decades understood by subsequent scholars as having been proved in toto a forgery, such that these succeeding scholars did not even mention it, unless to acknowledge it as false. (In addition to being repetitious, numerous quotes will be presented here, because a strong show of rational consensus is desperately needed when it comes to matters of blind, unscientific and irrational faith.) The scholars who so conclusively proved the TF a forgery made their mark at the end of the 18th century and into the 20th, when a sudden reversal was implemented, with popular opinion hemming and hawing its way back first to the "partial interpolation theory" and in recent times, among the third-rate apologists, to the notion that the whole TF is "genuine." As Earl Doherty says, in "Josephus Unbound":

"Now, it is a curious fact that older generations of scholars had no trouble dismissing this entire passage as a Christian construction. Charles Guignebert, for example, in his *Jesus* (1956, p.17), calls it 'a pure Christian forgery.' Before him, Lardner, Harnack and Schurer, along with others, declared it entirely spurious. Today, most serious scholars have decided the passage is a mix: original parts rubbing shoulders with later Christian additions."

Bishop Rev. Nathaniel Lardner imageThe earlier scholarship that proved the entire TF to be fraudulent was determined by intense scrutiny by some of the most erudite, and mainly Christian, writers of the time, in a number of countries, their works written in a variety of languages, but particularly German, French and English. Their general conclusions, as elucidated by Christian authority Dr. Lardner, and related here by the author of *Christian Mythology Unveiled* (c. 1842), include the following reasons for doubting the authenticity of the TF as a whole:

"Mattathias, the father of Josephus, must have been a witness to the miracles which are said to have been performed by Jesus, and Josephus was born within two years after the crucifixion, yet in all the works he says nothing whatever about the life or death of Jesus Christ; as for the interpolated passage it is now universally acknowledged to be a forgery. The arguments of the 'Christian Ajax,' even Lardner himself, against it are these: 'It was never quoted by any of our Christian ancestors before Eusebius. It disturbs the narrative. The language is quite Christian. It is not quoted by Chrysostom, though he often refers to Josephus, and could not have omitted quoting it had it been then in the text. It is not quoted by Photius [9th century], though he

has three articles concerning Josephus; and this author expressly states that this historian has not taken the least notice of Christ. Neither Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew; nor Clemens Alexandrinus, who made so many extracts from ancient authors; nor Origen against Celsus, have ever mentioned this testimony. But, on the contrary, in chap. 25th of the first book of that work, Origen openly affirms that Josephus, who had mentioned John the Baptist, did not acknowledge Christ. That this passage is a false fabrication is admitted by Ittigius, Blondel, Le Clerc, Vandale, Bishop Warburton, and Tanaquil Faber.'" (CMU, 47)

Hence, by the 1840's, when the anonymous author of *Christian Mythology Unveiled* wrote, the *Testimonium Flavianum* was already "universally acknowledged to be a forgery."

Origen church fatherThe pertinent remarks by the highly significant Church father Origen (c. 185-c.254) appear in his *Contra Celsus*, Book I, Chapter XLVII:

"For in the 18th book of his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus bears witness to John as having been a Baptist, and as promising purification to those who underwent the rite. Now this writer, although not believing in Jesus as the Christ, in seeking after the cause of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, whereas he ought to have said that the conspiracy against Jesus was the cause of these calamities befalling the people, since they put to death Christ, who was a prophet, says nevertheless--being, although against his will, not far from the truth--that these disasters happened to the Jews as a punishment for the death of James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus (called Christ)--the Jews having put him to death, although he was a man most distinguished for his justice" (Emphasis added)

Here, in Origen's words, is the assertion that Josephus, who discusses more than a dozen Jesuses, did not consider any of them to be "the Christ." This fact proves that the same phrase in the TF is spurious. Furthermore, Origen does not even intimate the presence of the rest of the TF. Concerning Origen and the TF, Arthur Drews relates in *Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus*:

"In the edition of Origen published by the Benedictines it is said that there was no mention of Jesus at all in Josephus before the time of Eusebius [c. 300 ce]. Moreover, in the sixteenth century Vossius had a manuscript of the text of Josephus in which there was not a word about Jesus. It seems, therefore, that the passage must have been an interpolation, whether it was subsequently modified or not." (Drews, 9; emph. added)

According to the author of *Christian Mythology Unveiled* ("CMU"), this Vossius mentioned by a number of writers as having possessed a copy of Josephus's *Antiquities* lacking the TF is "I. Vossius," whose works appeared in Latin. Unfortunately, none of these writers includes a citation as to where exactly the assertion may be found in Vossius's works. Moreover, the Vossius in question seems to be Gerardus, rather than his son, Isaac, who was born in the seventeenth century.

Church Fathers Ignorant of Josephus Passage

In any event, as G.A. Wells points out in *The Jesus Myth*, not only do several Church fathers from the second, third and early fourth centuries have no apparent knowledge of the TF, but even after Eusebius suddenly "found" it in the first half of the fourth century, several other fathers into the fifth "often cite Josephus, but not this passage." (Wells, JM, 202) In the 5th century, Church father Jerome (c. 347-c.419) cited the TF once, with obvious disinterest, as if he knew it was fraudulent. In addition to his reference to the TF, in his Letter XXII. to Eustochium, Jerome made the following audacious claim:

"Josephus, himself a Jewish writer, asserts that at the Lord's crucifixion there broke from the temple voices of heavenly powers, saying: 'Let us depart hence.'"

Either Jerome fabricated this alleged Josephus quote, or he possessed a unique copy of the Jewish historian's works, in which this assertion had earlier been interpolated. In any case, Jerome's claim constitutes "pious fraud," one of many committed by Christian proponents over the centuries, a rampant practice, in fact, that must be kept in mind when considering the authenticity of the TF.

Following is a list of important Christian authorities who studied and/or mentioned Josephus but not the Jesus passage:

Justin Martyr (c. 100-c. 165), who obviously pored over Josephus's works, makes no mention of the TF.

Theophilus (d. 180), Bishop of Antioch--no mention of the TF.

Irenaeus (c. 120/140-c. 200/203), saint and compiler of the New Testament, has not a word about the TF.

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-211/215), influential Greek theologian and prolific Christian writer, head of the Alexandrian school, says nothing about the TF.

Origen (c. 185-c. 254), no mention of the TF and specifically states that Josephus did not believe Jesus was "the Christ."

Hippolytus (c. 170-c. 235), saint and martyr, nothing about the TF.

The author of the ancient Syriac text, "History of Armenia," refers to Josephus but not the TF.

Minucius Felix (d. c. 250), lawyer and Christian convert--no mention of the TF.

Anatolius (230-c. 270/280)--no mention of TF.

Chrysostom (c. 347-407), saint and Syrian prelate, not a word about the TF.

Methodius, saint of the 9th century--even at this late date there were apparently copies of Josephus without the TF, as Methodius makes no mention of it.

Photius (c. 820-891), Patriarch of Constantinople, not a word about the TF, again indicating copies of Josephus devoid of the passage, or, perhaps, a rejection of it because it was understood to be fraudulent.

Arguments Against Authenticity Further Elucidated

When the evidence is scientifically examined, it becomes clear that the entire Josephus passage regarding Jesus was forged, likely by Church historian Eusebius, during the fourth century. In "Who on Earth was Jesus Christ?" David Taylor details the reasons why the TF in toto must be deemed a forgery, most of which arguments, again, were put

forth by Dr. Lardner:

"It was not quoted or referred to by any Christian apologists prior to Eusebius, c. 316 ad.

"Nowhere else in his voluminous works does Josephus use the word 'Christ,' except in the passage which refers to James 'the brother of Jesus who was called Christ' (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 20, Chapter 9, Paragraph 1), which is also considered to be a forgery.

"Since Josephus was not a Christian but an orthodox Jew, it is impossible that he should have believed or written that Jesus was the Christ or used the words 'if it be lawful to call him a man,' which imply the Christian belief in Jesus' divinity.

"The extraordinary character of the things related in the passage--of a man who is apparently more than a man, and who rose from the grave after being dead for three days--demanded a more extensive treatment by Josephus, which would undoubtedly have been forthcoming if he had been its author.

"The passage interrupts the narrative, which would flow more naturally if the passage were left out entirely.

"It is not quoted by Chrysostom (c. 354-407 ad) even though he often refers to Josephus in his voluminous writings.

"It is not quoted by Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople (c. 858-886 ad) even though he wrote three articles concerning Josephus, which strongly implies that his copy of Josephus' Antiquities did not contain the passage.

"Neither Justin Martyr (110-165 AD), nor Clement of Alexandria (153-217 ad), nor Origen (c.185-254 AD), who all made extensive reference to ancient authors in their defence of Christianity, has mentioned this supposed testimony of Josephus.

"Origen, in his treatise Against Celsus, Book 1, Chapter 47, states categorically that Josephus did NOT believe that Jesus was the Christ.

"This is the only reference to the Christians in the works of Josephus. If it were genuine, we would have expected him to have given us a fuller account of them somewhere."

When the earliest Greek texts are analyzed, it is obvious that the Testimonium Flavianum interrupts the flow of the primary material and that the style of the language is different from that of Josephus. There is other evidence that the TF never appeared in the original Josephus. As Wells says:

"As I noted in The Jesus Legend, there is an ancient table of contents in the Antiquities which omits all mention of the Testimonium. Feldman (in Feldman and Hata, 1987, p. 57) says that this table is already mentioned in the fifth- or sixth-century Latin version of the Antiquities, and he finds it 'hard to believe that such a remarkable passage would be omitted by anyone, let alone by a Christian summarizing the work.'" (Wells, JM, 201)

Flavius Josephus imageAlso, Josephus goes into long detail about the lives of numerous personages of relatively little import, including several Jesuses. It is inconceivable that he would devote only a few sentences to someone even remotely resembling the character found in the New Testament. If the gospel tale constituted

"history," Josephus's elders would certainly be aware of Jesus's purported assault on the temple, for example, and the historian, who was obviously interested in instances of messianic agitation, would surely have reported it, in detail. Moreover, the TF refers to Jesus as a "wise man"--this phrase is used by Josephus in regard to only two other people, out of hundreds, i.e., the patriarchs Joseph and Solomon. If Josephus had thought so highly of an historical Jesus, he surely would have written more extensively about him. Yet, he does not. Lest it be suggested that Josephus somehow could have been ignorant of the events in question, the Catholic Encyclopedia ("Flavius Josephus") says:

"... Josephus...was chosen by the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem to be commander-in-chief in Galilee. As such he established in every city throughout the country a council of judges, the members of which were recruited from those who shared his political views."

Indeed, Josephus was a well-educated Jew who lived in the precise area where the gospel tale was said to have taken place, as did his parents, the latter at the very time of Christ's alleged advent. It was Josephus's passion to study the Jewish people and their history; yet, other than the obviously bogus TF, and the brief "James passage" mentioned by Taylor above, it turns out that in his voluminous works Josephus discussed neither Christ nor Christianity. Nor does it make any sense that the prolific Jewish writer would not detail the Christian movement itself, were Christians extant at the time in any significant numbers.

The Catholic Encyclopedia (CE), which tries to hedge its bet about the Josephus passage, is nevertheless forced to admit: "The passage seems to suffer from repeated interpolations." In the same entry, CE also confirms that Josephus's writings were used extensively by the early Christian fathers, such as Jerome, Ambrose and Chrysostom; nevertheless, as noted, except for Jerome, they never mention the TF.

Regarding the TF, as well as the James passage, which possesses the phrase James, the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, Jewish writer ben Yehoshua makes some interesting assertions:

"Neither of these passages is found in the original version of the Jewish Antiquities which was preserved by the Jews. The first passage (XVII, 3, 3) was quoted by Eusebius writing in c. 320 C.E., so we can conclude that it was added in some time between the time Christians got hold of the Jewish Antiquities and c. 320 C.E. It is not known when the other passage (XX, 9, 1) was added... Neither passage is based on any reliable sources. It is fraudulent to claim that these passages were written by Josephus and that they provide evidence for Jesus. They were written by Christian redactors and were based purely on Christian belief."

Yehoshua claims that the 12th century historian Gerald of Wales related that a "Master Robert of the Priory of St. Frideswide at Oxford examined many Hebrew copies of Josephus and did not find the 'testimony about Christ,' except for two manuscripts where it appeared [to Robert, evidently] that the testimony had been present but

scratched out." Gerardus Vossius imageYehoshua states that, since "scratching out" requires the removal of the top layers, the deleted areas in these mere two of the many copies likely did not provide any solid evidence that it was the TF that had been removed. Apologists will no doubt insist that these Hebrew texts are late copies and that Jewish authorities had the TF removed. This accusation of mutilating an author's work, of course, can easily be turned around on the Christians. Also, considering that Vossius purportedly possessed a copy of the Antiquities without the TF, it is quite possible that there were "many Hebrew copies" likewise devoid of the passage.

Higher Criticism by Christian Authorities

The many reasons for concluding the Josephus passage to be a forgery have been expounded upon by numerous well-respected authorities, so much so that such individuals have been compelled by honesty and integrity to dismiss the Testimonium in toto as a forgery. In *The Christ*, John Remsburg relates the opinions of critics of the TF from the past couple of centuries, the majority of whom were Christian authorities, including and especially Dr. Lardner, who said:

"A testimony so favorable to Jesus in the works of Josephus, who lived so soon after our Savior, who was so well acquainted with the transactions of his own country, who had received so many favors from Vespasian and Titus, would not be overlooked or neglected by any Christian apologist (Lardner's Works, vol. I, chap. iv)."

Yet, the TF was overlooked and neglected by early Christian writers. In other words, they never cited it because it didn't exist.

Bishop William Warburton imageAnother authority, Bishop Warburton, called the TF a "rank forgery, and a very stupid one, too." Remsburg further related the words of the "Rev. Dr. Giles, of the Established Church of England," who stated:

"Those who are best acquainted with the character of Josephus, and the style of his writings, have no hesitation in condemning this passage as a forgery, interpolated in the text during the third century by some pious Christian, who was scandalized that so famous a writer as Josephus should have taken no notice of the gospels, or of Christ, their subject...."

In addition, the Rev. S. Baring-Gould remarked:

"This passage is first quoted by Eusebius (fl. A.D. 315) in two places (Hist. Eccl., lib. I, c. xi; Demonst. Evang., lib. iii); but it was unknown to Justin Martyr (fl. A.D. 140), Clement of Alexandria (fl. A.D. 192), Tertullian (fl. A.D. 193), and Origen (fl. A.D. 230). Such a testimony would certainly have been produced by Justin in his apology or in his controversy with Trypho the Jew, had it existed in the copies of Josephus at his time. The silence of Origen is still more significant. Celsus, in his book against Christianity, introduces a Jew. Origen attacks the argument of Celsus and his Jew. He could not have failed to quote the words of Josephus, whose writings he knew, had the passage existed in the genuine text. He, indeed, distinctly affirms that Josephus did not believe in Christ (Contr. Cels. I)."

Remsburg also recounts:

"Cannon Farrar, who has written an ablest Christian life of Christ yet penned, repudiates it. He says: 'The single passage in which he [Josephus] alludes to him is interpolated, if not wholly spurious' (Life of Christ, Vol. I, p. 46).

"The following, from Dr. Farrar's pen, is to be found in the Encyclopedia Britannica: 'That Josephus wrote the whole passage as it now stands no sane critic can believe.'"

And so on, with similar opinions by Christian scholars such as Theodor Keim, Rev. Dr. Hooykaas and Dr. Alexander Campbell. By the time of Dr. Chalmers and others, the TF had been so discredited that these authorities understood it as a forgery in toto and did not even consider it for a moment as "evidence" of Jesus's existence and/or divinity. In fact, these subsequent defenders of the faith, knowing the TF to be a forgery, repeatedly commented on how disturbing it was that Josephus did not mention Jesus.

In the modern apologist work *The Case for Christ*, Lee Strobel relates a passage from a novel published in 1979 by Charles Templeton, in which the author states, regarding Jesus, "There isn't a single word about him in secular history. Not a word. No mention of him by the Romans. Not so much as a reference by Josephus." (Strobel, 101) Strobel then reports the response by Christian professor Edwin Yamauchi, who claimed that Templeton was mistaken and that there was a reference to Jesus by Josephus. Yamauchi's fatuous response ignores, purposefully or otherwise, the previous ironclad arguments about which Templeton was apparently educated, such that he made such a statement. In other words, Templeton was evidently aware of the purported reference in Josephus but had understood by the arguments of the more erudite, earlier Christian authorities that it was a forgery; hence, there is "not so much as a reference by Josephus." In this facile manner of merely ignoring or dismissing the earlier scholarship, modern believers cling to the long-dismissed TF in order to convince themselves of the unbelievable.

For a more modern criticism, in *The Jesus Puzzle* and his online article "Josephus Unbound," secularist and classicist Earl Doherty leaves no stone unturned in demolishing the TF, permitting no squirming room for future apologists, whose resort to the TF will show, as it has done in the past, how hopeless is their plight in establishing an "historical Jesus." Concerning the use of Josephus as "evidence" of Jesus's existence, Doherty remarks:

"[I]n the absence of any other supporting evidence from the first century that in fact the Jesus of Nazareth portrayed in the Gospels clearly existed, Josephus becomes the slender thread by which such an assumption hangs. And the sound and fury and desperate manoeuverings which surround the dissection of those two little passages becomes a din of astonishing proportions. The obsessive focus on this one uncertain record is necessitated by the fact that the rest of the evidence is so dismal, so contrary to the orthodox picture. If almost everything outside Josephus points in a different direction, to the essential fiction of the Gospel picture and its central figure, how can

Josephus be made to bear on his shoulders, through two passages whose reliability has thus far remained unsettled, the counterweight to all this other negative evidence?"

Other modern authors who criticize the TF include The Jesus Mysteries authors Freke and Gandy, who conclude:

"Unable to provide any historical evidence for Jesus, later Christians forged the proof that they so badly needed to shore up their Literalist interpretation of the gospels. This, as we would see repeatedly, was a common practice." (Freke and Gandy, 137)

Despite the desperate din, a number of other modern writers remain in concurrence with the earlier scholarship and likewise consider the TF in toto a fraud.
The Suspect: Eusebius (c. 264-340)

Eusebius church father catholic historian imageIn addition to acknowledging the spuriousness of the Josephus passage, many authorities quoted here agreed with the obvious: Church historian Eusebius was the forger of the entire Testimonium Flavianum. Various reasons have already been given for making such a conclusion. In "Did Jesus Really Live?" Marshall Gauvin remarks:

"Everything demonstrates the spurious character of the passage. It is written in the style of Eusebius, and not in the style of Josephus. Josephus was a voluminous writer. He wrote extensively about men of minor importance. The brevity of this reference to Christ is, therefore, a strong argument for its falsity. This passage interrupts the narrative. It has nothing to do with what precedes or what follows it; and its position clearly shows that the text of the historian has been separated by a later hand to give it room."

Regarding the absence of the TF in the writings of earlier Christian fathers and its sudden appearance with Eusebius, CMU says:

"it has been observed that the famous passage which we find in Josephus, about Jesus Christ, was never mentioned or alluded to in any way whatever by any of the fathers of the first, second, or third centuries; nor until the time of Eusebius, 'when it was first quoted by himself [sic].' The truth is, none of these fathers could quote or allude to a passage which did not exist in their times; but was to all points short of absolutely certain, forged and interpolated by Eusebius, as suggested by Gibbon and others. Even the redoubtable Lardner has pronounced this passage to be a forgery." (CMU, 79-80)

Moreover, the word "tribe" in the TF is another clue that the passage was forged by Eusebius, who is fond of the word, while Josephus uses it only in terms of ethnicity, never when describing a religious sect. Kerry Shirts adds to this particular point:

"Eusebius studied Josephus diligently, and could thus masquerade as he, except when he used the word 'tribe' to describe the Christians. All the literature from the Ante-Nicene Fathers show they never used the word 'tribe' or 'race' with reference to the Christians, was [sic] either by the Fathers or when they quoted non-Christian

writers. Tertullian, Pliny the Younger, Trajan, Rufinus--none use 'tribe' to refer to Christians. Eusebius is the first to start the practice."

In *Antiqua Mater: A Study of Christian Origins*, Edwin Johnson remarked that the fourth century was "the great age of literary forgery, the extent of which has yet to be exposed." He further commented that "not until the mass of inventions labelled 'Eusebius' shall be exposed, can the pretended references to Christians in Pagan writers of the first three centuries be recognized for the forgeries they are." Indeed, Eusebius's character has been assailed repeatedly over the centuries, with him being called a "luminous liar" and "unreliable." Like so many others, Drews likewise criticizes Eusebius, stating that various of the Church historian's references "must be regarded with the greatest suspicion." As Drews relates, Swiss historian Jakob Burckhardt (1818-1897) declared Eusebius to be "the first thoroughly dishonest historian of antiquity." (Drews, 32/fn) Eusebius's motives were to empower the Catholic Church, and he did not fail to use "falsifications, suppressions, and fictions" to this end.

Conclusion: Josephus No Evidence of Jesus

Even if the Josephus passage were authentic, which we have essentially proved it not to be, it nevertheless would represent not an eyewitness account but rather a tradition passed along for at least six decades, long after the purported events. Hence, the TF would possess little if any value in establishing an "historical" Jesus. In any event, it is quite clear that the entire passage in Josephus regarding Christ, the *Testimonium Flavianum*, is spurious, false and a forgery. Regarding the TF, Remsburg summarizes:

"For nearly sixteen hundred years Christians have been citing this passage as a testimonial, not merely to the historical existence, but to the divine character of Jesus Christ. And yet a ranker forgery was never penned...."

"Its brevity disproves its authenticity. Josephus' work is voluminous and exhaustive. It comprises twenty books. Whole pages are devoted to petty robbers and obscure seditious leaders. Nearly forty chapters are devoted to the life of a single king. Yet this remarkable being, the greatest product of his race, a being of whom the prophets foretold ten thousand wonderful things, a being greater than any earthly king, is dismissed with a dozen lines...."

The dismissal of the passage in Josephus regarding Jesus is not based on "faith" or "belief" but on intense scientific scrutiny and reasoning. Such investigation has been confirmed repeatedly by numerous scholars who were mostly Christian. The *Testimonium Flavianum*, Dr. Lardner concluded in none too forceful words, "ought, therefore...to be discarded from any place among the evidences of Christianity." With such outstanding authority and so many scientific reasons, we can at last dispense with the pretentious charade of wondering if the infamous passage in the writings of Josephus called the *Testimonium Flavianum* is forged and who fabricated it.

Excerpted from *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled* by Acharya S.

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For more information, see Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled.

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Pliny, Tacitus and Suetonius:
No Proof of Jesus
by D.M. Murdock/Acharya S

Excerpted from:

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Like those of the Jewish writer Josephus, the works of the ancient historians Pliny, Suetonius and Tacitus do not provide proof that Jesus Christ ever existed as a "historical" character.

Pliny the Younger, Roman Official and Historian (62-113 CE)

In addition to the palpably bogus passage in the Antiquities of the Jews by Josephus called the "Testimonium Flavianum" is another of the pitiful "references" dutifully trotted out by apologists to prove the existence of Jesus Christ: To wit, a short passage in the

works of the Roman historian Pliny the Younger. While proconsul of Bithynia, a province in the northwest of Asia Minor, Pliny purportedly wrote a letter in 110 CE to the Emperor Trajan requesting his assistance in determining the proper punishment for "Christiani" who were causing trouble and would not renounce "Christo" as their god or bow down to the image of the Emperor. These recalcitrant Christiani, according to the Pliny letter, met "together before daylight" and sang "hymns with responses to Christ as a god," binding themselves "by a solemn institution, not to any wrong act." Regarding this letter, Rev. Robert Taylor remarks:

If this letter be genuine, these nocturnal meetings were what no prudent government could allow; they fully justify the charges of Caecilius in Minutius Felix, of Celsus in Origen, and of Lucian, that the primitive Christians were a skulking, light-shunning, secret, mystical, freemasonry sort of confederation, against the general welfare and peace of society.

Serapis the Chrestos Taylor also comments that, at the time this letter was purportedly written, "Christians" were considered to be followers of the Greco-Egyptian god Serapis and that "the name of Christ [was] common to the whole rabblement of gods, kings, and priests." Writing around 134 CE, Hadrian purportedly stated:

"The worshippers of Serapis are Christians, and those are devoted to the God Serapis, who call themselves the bishops of Christ. There is no ruler of a Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no Presbyter of the Christians, who is not either an astrologer, a soothsayer, or a minister to obscene pleasures. The very Patriarch himself, should he come into Egypt, would be required by some to worship Serapis, and by others to worship Christ. They have, however, but one God, and it is one and the self-same whom Christians, Jews and Gentiles alike adore, i.e., money."

It is thus possible that the "Christos" or "Anointed" god Pliny's "Christiani" were following was Serapis himself, the syncretic deity created by the priesthood in the third century BCE. In any case, this god "Christos" was not a man who had been crucified in Judea.

Moreover, like his earlier incarnation Osiris, Serapis—both popular gods in the Roman Empire—was called not only Christos but also "Chrestos," centuries before the common era. Indeed, Osiris was styled "Chrestos," centuries before his Jewish copycat Jesus was ever conceived....

In any event, the value of the Pliny letter as "evidence" of Christ's existence is worthless, as it makes no mention of "Jesus of Nazareth," nor does it refer to any event in his purported life. There is not even a clue in it that such a man existed. As Taylor remarks, "We have the name of Christ, and nothing else but the name, where the name of Apollo or Bacchus would have filled up the sense quite as well." Taylor then casts doubt on the authenticity of the letter as a whole, recounting the work of German critics, who "have maintained that this celebrated letter is another instance to be added to the long list of Christian forgeries..." One of these German luminaries, Dr. Semler of Leipsic provided "nine arguments against its authenticity..." He also notes that the Pliny epistle is quite similar to that allegedly written by "Tiberianus, Governor of Syria" to Trajan,

which has been universally denounced as a forgery.

Also, like the *Testimonium Flavianum*, Pliny's letter is not quoted by any early Church father, including Justin Martyr. Tertullian briefly mentions its existence, noting that it refers to terrible persecutions of Christians. However, the actual text used today comes from a version by a Christian monk in the 15th century, Lucundus of Verona, whose composition apparently was based on Tertullian's assertions. Concurring that the Pliny letter is suspicious, Drews terms "doubtful" Tertullian's "supposed reference to it." Drews then names several authorities who likewise doubted its authenticity, "either as a whole or in material points," including Semler, Aub, Havet, Hochart, Bruno Bauer and Edwin Johnson. Citing the work of Hochart specifically, Drews pronounces Pliny's letter "in all probability" a "later Christian forgery." Even if it is genuine, Pliny's letter is useless in determining any "historical" Jesus.

Tacitus, Roman Politician and Historian, (c. 56-120 CE)

Publius/Gaius Cornelius Tacitus Turning next to another stalwart in the anemic apologist arsenal, Tacitus, sufficient reason is uncovered to doubt this Roman author's value in proving an "historical" Jesus. In his *Annals*, supposedly written around 107 CE, Tacitus purportedly related that the Emperor Nero (37-68) blamed the burning of Rome during his reign on "those people who were abhorred for their crimes and commonly called Christians." Since the fire evidently broke out in the poor quarter where fanatic, agitating Messianic Jews allegedly jumped for joy, thinking the conflagration represented the eschatological development that would bring about the Messianic reign, it would not be unreasonable for authorities to blame the fire on them. However, it is clear that these Messianic Jews were not (yet) called "Christiani." In support of this contention, Nero's famed minister, Seneca (5?-65), whose writings evidently provided much fuel for the incipient Christian ideology, has not a word about these "most-hated" sectarians.

...the Tacitean passage next states that these fire-setting agitators were followers of "Christus" (Christos), who, in the reign of Tiberius, "was put to death as a criminal by the procurator Pontius Pilate." The passage also recounts that the Christians, who constituted a "vast multitude at Rome," were then sought after and executed in ghastly manners, including by crucifixion. However, the date that a "vast multitude" of Christians was discovered and executed would be around 64 CE, and it is evident that there was no "vast multitude" of Christians at Rome by this time, as there were not even a multitude of them in Judea. Oddly, this brief mention of Christians is all there is in the voluminous works of Tacitus regarding this extraordinary movement, which allegedly possessed such power as to be able to burn Rome. Also, the Neronian persecution of Christians is unrecorded by any other historian of the day and supposedly took place at the very time when Paul was purportedly freely preaching at Rome (Acts 28:30-31), facts that cast strong doubt on whether or not it actually happened. Drews concludes that the Neronian persecution is likely "nothing but the product of a Christian's imagination in the fifth century." Eusebius, in discussing this persecution, does not avail himself of the Tacitean passage, which he surely would have done had it existed at the time. Eusebius's discussion is very short, indicating he was lacking source material; the passage in Tacitus would have provided him a very valuable resource.

Even conservative writers such as James Still have problems with the authenticity of the Tacitus passage: For one, Tacitus was an imperial writer, and no imperial document would ever refer to Jesus as "Christ." Also, Pilate was not a "procurator" but a prefect, which Tacitus would have known. Nevertheless, not willing to throw out the entire passage, some researchers have concluded that Tacitus "was merely repeating a story told to him by contemporary Christians."

Eusebius of Caesarea, Catholic Church HistorianBased on these and other facts, several scholars have argued that, even if the Annals themselves were genuine, the passage regarding Jesus was spurious. One of these authorities was Rev. Taylor, who suspected the passage to be a forgery because it too is not quoted by any of the Christian fathers, including Tertullian, who read and quoted Tacitus extensively. Nor did Clement of Alexandria notice this passage in any of Tacitus's works, even though one of this Church father's main missions was to scour the works of Pagan writers in order to find validity for Christianity. As noted, the Church historian Eusebius, who likely forged the Testimonium Flavianum, does not relate this Tacitus passage in his abundant writings. Indeed, no mention is made of this passage in any known text prior to the 15th century.

The tone and style of the passage are unlike the writing of Tacitus, and the text "bears a character of exaggeration, and trenches on the laws of rational probability, which the writings of Tacitus are rarely found to do." Taylor further remarks upon the absence in any of Tacitus's other writings of "the least allusion to Christ or Christians." In his well-known Histories, for example, Tacitus never refers to Christ, Christianity or Christians. Furthermore, even the Annals themselves have come under suspicion, as they themselves had never been mentioned by any ancient author....

In any event, even if the Annals were genuine, the pertinent passage itself could easily be an interpolation, based on the abundant precedents and on the fact that the only manuscript was in the possession of one person, de Spire. In reality, "none of the works of Tacitus have come down to us without interpolations."

Regarding Christian desperation for evidence of the existence of Christ, Dupuis comments that true believers are "reduced to look, nearly a hundred years after, for a passage in Tacitus" that does not even provide information other than "the etymology of the word Christian," or they are compelled "to interpolate, by pious fraud, a passage in Josephus." Neither passage, Dupuis concludes, is sufficient to establish the existence of such a remarkable legislator and philosopher, much less a "notorious impostor."

It is evident that Tacitus's remark is nothing more than what is said in the Apostle's Creed—to have the authenticity of the mighty Christian religion rest upon this Pagan author's scanty and likely forged comment is preposterous. Even if the passage in Tacitus were genuine, it would be too late and is not from an eyewitness, such that it is valueless in establishing an "historical" Jesus, representing merely a recital of decades-old Christian tradition.

Suetonius, Roman Historian (c. 69-c. 122 CE)

Suetonius, Nuremberg Chronicle Moving through the standard list of defenses, we come to the Roman historian Suetonius. The passage in Suetonius's Life of Claudius, dating to around 110 CE, states that the emperor Claudius "drove the Jews out of Rome, who at the suggestion of Chrestus were constantly rioting." The passage in Latin is as follows:

Claudius Judaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit.

We see that the reference is to "Chresto," not "Christo." In any case, Claudius reigned from 41-54, while Christ was purported to have been crucified around 30, so the great Jewish sage could not have been in Rome personally at that time. Even such an eager believer and mesmerized apologist as Shirley Jackson Case must admit that Christ himself couldn't have been at Rome then, that the "natural meaning" of the remark is that "a disturbance was caused by a Jew named Chrestus" living in Rome at the time, and that Suetonius's "references to Christianity itself are very obscure."

It is possible that these diasporic Jews—a mixture of Hebrew, Jewish, Samaritan and Pagan descent—revered their god under the epithet of "Chresto." Or, as Eisenman suggests, the incident may record Jews agitating over the appointment of Herod Agrippa I as king of Judea by his friend Claudius in 41 CE. In this regard, Agrippa I is called "chrestos" by Josephus.

In his Life of Nero, Suetonius refers to "Christiani," whom he calls "a race of men of a new and villainous, wicked or magical superstition," who "were visited with punishment." This passage, although establishing that there were people called "Christiani" who were a fairly recent cult in Suetonius's time, obviously does not serve as evidence that Jesus Christ ever existed.

Regarding these "references," if they were genuine they would no more prove the existence of Jesus Christ than do writings about other gods prove their existence. In other words, by this same argument we could provide many "references" from ancient writers that the numerous Pagan gods also existed as "real people." In this case, Jesus would be merely a johnny-come-lately in a long line of "historical" godmen.

In the final analysis there is no evidence that the biblical character called "Jesus Christ" ever existed. As Nicholas Carter concludes in The Christ Myth: "No sculptures, no drawings, no markings in stone, nothing written in his own hand; and no letters, no commentaries, indeed no authentic documents written by his Jewish and Gentile contemporaries, Justice of Tiberius, Philo, Josephus, Seneca, Petronius Arbiter, Pliny the Elder, et al., to lend credence to his historicity."

For more information, including citations, see Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled. See also Who Was Jesus? Fingerprints of The Christ.

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Is Suetonius's Chresto a Reference to Jesus?

by D.M. Murdock/Acharya S

Does the Roman historian refer to the historical Jesus of Nazareth, or is the famous Suetonian passage concerning "Chresto" about another individual altogether?

Suetonius, represented in the Nuremberg Chronicle One of the few citations from antiquity proffered by Christian apologists and others to prove the purported historicity of the figure "Jesus Christ" is a sentence from the ancient Roman historian Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus's *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* (book 5, Life of Claudius 25.4). Published around 120 AD/CE, this passage is one of two in Suetonius's works held up as "evidence" of Jesus of Nazareth's existence as a "historical" personage, the second a sentence in that writer's Life of Nero 16.2 which supposedly discusses "Christians." Here I will examine the Claudius passage in terms of its value in this quest for the "historical Christ." 'Christ' or 'Chrest'?

In presenting this purported evidence from Suetonius's Claudius 25.4, Christian apologists typically cite an English translation, such as:

As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus (another spelling of Christ), he (Claudius) expelled them from Rome. (Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (1979), 83)

The Christian-preferred Latin of this sentence is as follows:

Iudaeos impulsore Christo assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit

However, it is now the scholarly consensus that the original Latin of this passage must have been the following:

Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit

This latter version with the word *Chrēsto*, not *Christo*, is what our earliest extant manuscripts relate. Contrary to what Christian apologist Josh McDowell and other fundamentalists assert, and despite the fact that the two words are evidently related through the roots *χρίω* and *χράω*, "*Chrēsto*," the ablative of *Chrestus*, is not an "another spelling of Christ." These terms represent Latinizations of two different Greek words that sound quite similar: *Chrēstos*, sometimes a proper name, means "good," "righteous" or "useful"; while *Christos* denotes "anointed" or "messiah." Hence, although an earlier generation of scholars believed that this Suetonian passage reflected the uprisings of Jews against Christians in Rome, we are not certain at all that this purported "reference" in Suetonius has anything to do with Christ and Christians.

"We are not certain at all that this purported 'reference' in Suetonius has anything to do with Christ and Christians."

Scientific studies of Suetonius's extant works demonstrate that "*Chresto*" is the most common epithet in the manuscript tradition. As we will discover, *Chresto* or its Greek original, *Chrestos*, was commonly found in pre-Christian antiquity, and its presence in

Suetonius most likely had nothing to do with any historical founder of Christianity called "Jesus the Christ." Rather, this commonly held title was one of the earliest applied to what is clearly a fictional composite of characters, real and mythical, styled "Jesus the Good."

In addition, the event in which Claudius expelled Jews from Rome is recorded elsewhere in other histories - without the "impulsore Chresto" claim - and seems to date to around 49, 52 or 53 AD/CE, an incident that apparently was unrelated to a historical Jesus of Nazareth and cannot serve as evidence for his historicity.

Chrestos in Pagan Antiquity

In reality, the term "Chrestos" or χρηστός has been used in association with a plethora of people and gods, beginning centuries before the common era. Chrestos and its plural chrestoi were utilized to describe deities, oracles, philosophers, priests, oligarchs, "valuable citizens," slaves, heroes, the deceased and others. Importantly, chrestos appears to have been the title of "perfected saints" in various mystery schools or brotherhoods, associated with oracular activity in particular.

This word χρηστός or chrestos appears in ancient Greek sources such as those of playwright Sophocles (497/6-406/5 BCE), who discusses ὁ χρηστός, "the good man," in *Antigone* (520). Also composed during the fifth century BCE and containing numerous instances of chrestos are playwright Euripides's works *Heraclidae*, *Hecuba*, *Troïades* and *Iphigenia*. Other ancient writers such as Herodotus, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Xenophon, Pseudo-Xenophon, Plato, Isocrates, Aeschines, Demosthenes, Plutarch and Appian likewise use this term chrestos or "good," sometimes quite often. In an anonymous tract discovered among the possessions of historian Xenophon (c. 430–354), the "Old Oligarch," modernly styled Pseudo-Xenophon (fl. c. 425), contrasts "the good man" (chrestos) with "the wicked man" (poneros), a common juxtaposition throughout classical antiquity that found its way into the New Testament as well (e.g., Lk 6:35).

Socrates the Chrestos

The fact that Plato (424/423-348/347 BCE) frequently mentions "the good" (χρηστός) when discussing various figures (e.g., *Plat. Rep.* 5.479a) serves as an indication of the word's importance among philosophers and religionists. This association is especially germane considering the exalted place afforded Plato among spiritual seekers for centuries into the common era, including many Christians and assorted "Neoplatonists." Indeed, Plato (*Theaetetus* 166.a.2) uses the word to describe famed philosopher Socrates: ὁ Σωκράτης ὁ χρηστός - "Socrates the Good."

"In the fifth century BCE, Plato referred to the famous Greek philosopher of Athens as 'Socrates the Chrest.'"

The term continued to be used throughout classical antiquity, into the common era. Indeed, the Greek historian Plutarch (c. 46-120 AD/CE), writing precisely at the time when the Christian effort begins to become noticeable, uses the word χρηστός chrestos numerous times, including to describe Alexander the Great (*Alex.* 30.3), illustrating the

term's ongoing or increased currency at this time.

There are also many uses of the plural word χρηστοί or chrestoi in ancient writings, such as in Euripides, Aristophanes, Thucydides, Isocrates, Plato and numerous times in Xenophon. What we discover, then, is a slew of chrests in ancient, pre-Christian literature, including as concerns the biblical god, as we will see below. We also find repeated references to chrests in the writings of early Church fathers, such as Clement Alexandrinus (Strom. 2), Gregorius Nazianzenus, Athanasius, and especially Cyrillus Alexandrinus and Joannes Chrysostomus.

Chrestos in Religion and Spirituality

Chrestos heros in an inscription from Delphi, GreeceThe term χρηστός chrestos was utilized not only in secular situations but also within ancient religion, philosophy, spirituality and the all-important mysteries, which concerned life and death, including near-death experiences and afterlife traditions. "Chrestos" was one of the titles for the dead in tomb writings "of the Greeks in all ages, pre-Christian as well as post-Christian." Examples of these epithets can be studied in August Boeckh's Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum. We read elsewhere that the epithet "Chrestos" appears commonly on the epitaphs of most citizens of Larissa, Greece, specifically in the form of chrestos heros , this latter term meaning "hero" and "demigod." The Greek word chrestos was popular also as an epithet or on epitaphs at various Egyptian funerary sites as at Alexandria and elsewhere.

Moreover, the oracular usages of these terms needs to be emphasized, in that chrestos and chrestoi were already utilized in conjunction with deity, religion, spirituality, mysticism and magic, long before the common era. This oracular convention also appears in the New Testament (e.g., Mt 2:12, 2:22; Lk 3:26; Acts 10:22; Heb 8:5, 11:7), in which the verb χρηματίζω chrematizo is employed as connoting "to warn of God." Strong's (G5537) defines chrematizo as "to be the mouthpiece of divine revelations, to promulgate the commands of God."

"The oracular usage of chrestos can be found in the New Testament, employed as connoting 'to warn of God.'"

As another example of the Pagan use of the word chrestos, in 2008 an evidently pre-Christian cup or bowl was found at Alexandria, Egypt, with the genitive form chrestou inscribed on it. This artifact could predate the common era by decades, part of the genre of magical bowls used for protection and incantation. Another artifact with significance in this analysis of the uses of chrestos in antiquity is the chi-rho symbol. Chrestos Bowl, discovered by Franck Goddio in 2008 Chi Rho symbol used for both 'christ' and 'chrest.'

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In addition, it is claimed that this title chrestos/chreste was conferred upon the Greek god and goddess Hades and Persephone, divinities of the underworld. "Chrestos" was also bestowed upon the "ubiquitous mystic" or Greek god Hermes, the "Psychopomp" or guide to the afterlife, also an important figure in underworld mythology and in mystery schools. So too is the title claimed of the Greek sun god Apollo, god of oracles. In the Saturnalia (3.4.8) of ancient Latin author Macrobius (c. 400 AD/CE), we read that, "according to Cassius Hemina, the Gods of the Samothracian mysteries were styled Θεοὶ Χρηστοὶ [Theoi Chrestoi]." (Mitchell, 18)

Speaking further about Roman historian Lucius Cassius Hemina (fl. 146 BCE), Macrobius states that he also calls the Roman goddess Juno "khrêstê," which Macrobius names as an epithet of bona Iuno or "good Juno," thus identifying the Greek and Latin words with each other. In Latin, therefore, the comparable epithet conveyed upon divinities is Bonus - "Good" - and we find many deities honored with this epithet, including the deity Bona Dea or "Good Goddess."

After Greek became a popular language around the Mediterranean, and the Egyptian pantheon spread outside its native borders, a number of Egyptian "good" deities may also have been called chrestos/e, as we know was the case with the goddess Isis. The Egyptian "Houses of Goodness" may likewise have been labeled by this term when their name was rendered into Greek.

'Isis Chreste' in a Greek inscription

There is much more to this subject of the Pagan usage of the word chrestos and its related terms, enough for a significant monograph.

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The Good Lord

Significantly, like the Pagans, Jews too employed the term Chrestos to describe their god: "Since the OT more readily associates majesty and condescension, it commonly uses chrêstós for God..." (Kittel, 1321) This fact gives us reason to suspect that Suetonius's Jews rabbleroising at Rome were in fact doing so in the name of their god, Yahweh the Chrestos, rather than at the instigation of a historical personage by the epithet of Chresto.

In the Greek Bible or Septuagint ("LXX"), a translation begun about 200 years before the common era, the word chrestos occurs in conjunction with "the Lord God," as a rendering of the Hebrew word טוב towb (Strong's H2896), meaning "good, pleasant,

agreeable," as well as "good, rich, valuable in estimation." For example, at Jeremiah 33:11 (LXX 40:11), we read that "good [is] the Lord," χρηστός κύριος, literally "Chrest Lord." Psalm 106:1 (LXX 105:11) says:

αλληλουια ἐξομολογεῖσθε τῷ κυρίῳ ὅτι χρηστός...

Allelouia, give praise to the Lord that [he is] good...

The beginning of the next chapter (Ps 107:1; LXX 106:1) starts with the same invocation of the "Good Lord."

Thus, we find "the Lord God the Chrest" in the Greek OT/Septuagint, and the Lord is also chrestos at Psalm 25:8 (LXX 24:8). At Psalm 52:9 (LXX 51:11), God's name is chrestos, while at Psalm 69:16 (LXX 68:17), His mercy is chrestos.

God is likewise called ὁ χρηστός or "the Chrest" in the intertestamental Jewish text Maccabees II (1.24). In addition, we find chrestos in the important works of the Jewish philosopher Philo (20 BCE-50 AD/CE), in which God is likewise described using this adjective, meaning "good," "friendly" or "kind." One such usage in Philo occurs in De Mutatione Nominum ("On the Change of Names"), 44: , rendered by Yonge (362) as "the merciful God." The Jewish historian Josephus too uses the term with similar meanings as well. (Kittel, 1321)

New Testament Chrestos

We also find seven uses of the word chrestos in the New Testament: Mt 11:30; Lk 5:39, 6:35; Rom 2:4; 1 Cor 15:33; Eph 4:32; and 1 Pe 2:3. In this regard, Luke 6:35 also associates God with chrestos, demonstrating an ongoing tradition concerning the "Good Lord," beginning centuries before the common era and extending decades into it:

...καὶ ἔσεσθε υἱοὶ τοῦ ὑψίστου ὅτι αὐτὸς χρηστός ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀχαρίστους καὶ πονηροὺς

...and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish.

Here Luke uses another term from antiquity, πονηροὺς or ponerous , "selfish," previously mentioned, as contrasted with chrestos in ancient pre-Christian Greek philosophy. Obviously, the term chrestos as used here in the NT verse comes from (Greek) Paganism, along with, we submit, much else.

The verse at Romans 2:4 uses two different forms of chrestos, both applied to God, the second instance of which refers to τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ or the "chrest of God."

The epistle 1 Peter (2:3) - which does not emerge clearly in the literary record until the second century - also calls "the Lord" χρηστός or chrestos, in reference to God, not Jesus:

ἐγεύσασθε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος

you have tasted that good [is] the Lord

Essentially, this phrase reads "the Lord Chrest," apparently based on Psalm 34:8 (LXX 33:9):

γεύσασθε καὶ ἴδετε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος...

taste and see that good [is] the Lord

This passage was confounded in antiquity by Church fathers such as Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215), who depicted it as saying: "Taste and see that Christ is God" (Exhortation to the Heathens, 9). This fact demonstrates the Chrest-Christ confusion around the beginning of the third century.

The word appears at Ephesians 4:32 as well:

γίνεσθε δὲ εἰς ἀλλήλους χρηστοὶ εὖσπλαγχνοι χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς καθὼς καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ ἔχαρίσατο ὑμῖν

Become to others chrestoi, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, as God in Christ forgave you.

It should be emphasized that the good/kind followers of "Christ" were called "chrests," a fact that might explain why "Christians" were also styled "Chrestians."

"Chrestos appears in the Bible, in verses about God in both the Old and New Testaments."

As we can see, the usage of "Chrestos" in conjunction with deity is pre-Christian, continuing well into the common era, within the Bible as well, in verses about God in both Old and New Testaments. Thus, again, no "historical" Chresto is necessary to explain the behavior of Suetonius's Jews.

The Divine Impeller?

Adding to this notion that the Jews at Rome could have been rabbleroising because of their god, the "Good Lord" Yahweh, in Suetonius the Latin word impulsore is the ablative form of impulsor and denotes not "instigation" but "instigator." This scenario would not require a historical personage named Chresto to be present or even the memory of a deceased messianic figure. The passage is translated better as, "Jews because of the instigator Chresto," where impulsor could also mean one who "impels" someone else to do something, a "persuader," "prompter," "enticer," "pusher," "inciter," "inducer," "abettor," "stimulator," "mover," "encourager," "enabler" and "consiliarius," this latter word used in the Vulgate of Isaiah 9:6, describing the "Mighty God" as "Counsellor."

In the first century BCE, Roman statesman and philosopher Marcus Tullius ("Tully") Cicero (On the Consular Provinces, 8) wrote that a certain political "storm" had been excited by "Caesar the impeller" (Caesare impulsore). Moreover, in the play *Aulularia* or *The Pot of Gold* (735) by Titus Maccius Plautus (c. 254-c. 184 BCE), we find the line: *deus impulsor mihi fuit*, which could be rendered, "A god was my impeller." Hence, we see that this term *impulsor* was associated with deity in the second to third centuries before the common era, as well as into it.

In this regard, in *City of God* (1.7.11), Church father Augustine (354-430) remarks of the Roman god Jupiter:

They have called him Victor, Invictus, Opitulus, Impulsor, Stator...and other names which it were long to enumerate.

There is no record of Jews or anyone else being impelled by or worshipping "Jesus the Good" or a historical Chresto at Rome by this time, but there is plenty of evidence of Jews worshipping their god Yahweh as *chrestos* or *chresto*. Thus, the situation of Jews being "constantly tumultuous" because of the "impulsor" Yahweh "the Good" may have been akin to rabbleroising Muslims inspired by "Allah the Merciful." Again, no historical Chresto or "Chrest" is needed.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that the Suetonian sentence in question apparently used originally the word "Chresto." Combined with the facts that Christ was never related as having been at Rome, that the phrase "Jesus the Good" evidently does not make its appearance until the third or late second century at the earliest, and that the word *chrestos* was used to describe gods and many other figures in antiquity, doubt is cast upon the value of this passage as providing any evidence that "Jesus of Nazareth" was an actual historical figure.

Moreover, the fact that Suetonius called Chresto's followers "Judeans" or "Jews," rather than associating them with the "Christians" or, perhaps, "Chrestians" of his Nero passage, tends to negate the idea that the Roman historian is referring to a historical "Jesus Christ." The evidence points, rather, to another individual or, more likely, their tribal god, Yahweh the Good, as the "Chresto" of Suetonius's Jews.

"The Chrest under whose instigation the Jews at Rome constantly revolted could have been the god Yahweh, not a historical Jesus of Nazareth."

In summary, the "Chrest" under whose instigation at Rome the Jews were revolting could have been their Lord God, called "the Good" or *chrestos* in the Old Testament. No "historical Jesus of Nazareth" would be needed, and we may retire this purported Suetonian "proof" from Christian apologetics.

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 Chrestes as Oracle and Chrematizo in the New Testament
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The "Historical" Jesus?
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The following article is excerpted from:

Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled

suns of god cover image

When were the gospels written? With their absence in Justin Martyr's works, we remain with the dating of the gospels to the last quarter of the second century.

The Gospel Dates

When scrutinized, the Pauline epistles do not reveal any historical Jesus; nor do they demonstrate any knowledge of the existence of the four canonical gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. As has been proved repeatedly, the gospels themselves cannot be viewed as "history" written by "eyewitnesses." Besides the fact that they date to much later than is supposed, the gospels frequently contradict each other, and, based on the numerous manuscripts composed over the centuries, have been determined (by German theologian Johann Griesbach, for one) to be a mass of some 150,000 "variant readings." In this regard, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, a Christian book, contains an article written by M.M. Parvis (vol. 4, 594-595), who states:

The New Testament is now known, in whole or in part, in nearly five thousand Greek manuscripts alone. Every one of these handwritten copies differ from the other one. It has been estimated that these manuscripts and quotations differ among themselves between 150,000 and 250,000 times. The actual figure is, perhaps, much higher. A study of 150 Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of Luke has revealed more than 30,000 different readings. It is safe to say that there is not one sentence in the New Testament in which the manuscripts' tradition is wholly uniform.

Some sources place the figure for the "variant readings" even higher, including The Anchor Bible Dictionary On CD-ROM ("Textual Criticism, NT"), which says, "Perhaps 300,000 differing readings is a fair figure for the 20th century (K.W. Clark 1962: 669)." So much for "God's infallible Word" and his "inspired scribes." Apologists have come up with all sorts of excuses for this manmade mess; their excuses only demonstrate further that man's hand - and not that of the Almighty God - has been involved in the creation of Christianity and its texts at every step.

Rylands papyrus P52 John's gospel. It would be impossible to date the appearance of the gospels based on the extant manuscripts, since the autographs or originals were destroyed long ago, an act that would appear to be the epitome of blasphemy, were these texts truly the precious testimonials by the Lord's very disciples themselves. Although a miniscule bit of papyrus (Rylands P52) dating to the middle of the second century has been identified speculatively as part of "John's Gospel" (18:31-33), the oldest fragments conclusively demonstrated as coming from the canonical gospels date to the 3rd century. The two verses of "John's Gospel," comprising only about 60 words, could easily be part of another, non-canonical gospel, of which there were numerous in the first centuries of the Christian era. That such texts contained verses paralleling those found in the canonical gospels is known from the writings of Justin Martyr, for example, who quotes from a number of them.

In reality, the four gospels selected for inclusion in the New Testament do not make any appearance in the literary and archaeological record until the last quarter of the 2nd century, between 170 and 180 CE, and even then they are not much mentioned for a couple of decades. In this regard, Church father and archbishop of Constantinople John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) stated that the names traditionally attached to the canonical gospels were first designated at the end of the second century. The orthodox dating, of course, attempts to put the gospels a century earlier, between 70 and 110 CE. However, it should be kept in mind that the current mainstream dating was heretical when first propagated, over 150 years ago, causing apoplexy in the faithful, who believed the texts were composed shortly after Jesus's death. Over the centuries, because of increasingly scientific scholarship, the date of the canonical gospels has been continually pushed to later decades, as it has long been accepted that there is absolutely no evidence, internal or external, for such an early date.

The early dating is mere wishful thinking on the part of those who truly believe that Jesus Christ existed and that his words, deed and life were faithfully recorded by eyewitnesses, i.e., his disciples. Such a scenario is not reality, however, and the most scholarship can offer in bending the dates to fit the alleged advent of Jesus Christ in the time of Herod is that the gospels were composed during the last decades of the first century. The internal evidence cited for this "late" a date is that the gospel writers were aware of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Therefore, Mark, considered by most mainstream authorities to be the earliest of the gospels, could not have been written any earlier than 70 CE. The others followed, with John appearing perhaps as late as 110 CE. That is where mainstream scholarship ends. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the gospels are conspicuously absent from the writings of the Church fathers and apologists until the end of the second century.

Evangelist Mark Gospel imageAs concerns the order in which the gospels were written, the priority of Mark was proposed as early as 1786 by Storr and argued in detail by Christian Wilke in 1838. According to proponents of the specious "outdated" argument, which claims that newer scholarship is better and more correct merely by virtue of its "modernity," the Markan—priority thesis is a very "outdated" premise and must therefore be wrong. By this same argument, "Q" scholarship—which proposes that an original "sayings" text was used in the creation of the gospels - is likewise "outdated," because it too began over a century and a half ago, with the research of Christian Weiss, also in 1838. It should be noted that even the existence of a Q document has been argued against by a number of scholars, including Farrer (1955), Farmer (1964) and Hobbs (1980).

Despite these facts, it is perceived that to go against the crowd is to commit scholarly heresy! In actuality, critics of the Mark-priority thesis must come afterwards, obviously, which makes their theories more "modern." G.R.S. Mead, for one, writing after the Markan-priority thesis was proposed, was insistent that the other synoptists, Matthew and Luke, did not use the canonical Mark as one of their source texts: "It is very evident that Mt. and Lk. do not use our Mk., though they use most of the material contained in our Mk."

This conclusion was also reached by Helmut Koester and others in the modern era. Indeed, scholars have hit upon an "Ur-Markus" or source of Mark from which all three synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke) drew. Hence, it is asserted by Ur-Markus proponents that the other two synoptics did not use the canonical Mark. The Ur-Markus theory was developed by Weisse in the 1850s. At the end of the 19th century, Hernle attempted to prove that Ur-Markus was the canonical Mark, and the debate was supposedly settled in the 1920s. Yet, modern mainstream scholars continue to debate the priority. As Burton Mack says, in *The Lost Gospel of Q*, "Even today there are scholars who continue to favor Matthew as the earliest gospel."

Following Griesbach (1783), the Tubingen School in the 1830s maintained not only the priority but also the late date of 130 CE for Matthew, swimming firmly against the tide. Scholars of the 20th century who have argued for the priority of Matthew include "Jameson, Chapman, Butler, and Wenham."

The fact is that scholars have gone back and forth on the order, as did the early Church fathers. As the Catholic Encyclopedia relates ("Synoptics"):

The order: Matthew, Luke, Mark, was advanced by Griesbach and has been adopted by De Wette, Bleek, Maier, Langen, Grimm, Pasquier. The arrangement: Mark, Matthew, Luke, with various modifications as to their interdependence, is admitted by Ritschl, Reuss, Meyer, Wilke, Simons, Holtzmann, Weiss, Batiffol, Weizsacker, etc. It is often designated under the name of the "Mark hypothesis", although in the eyes of most of its defenders, it is no longer a hypothesis, meaning thereby that it is an established fact. Besides these principal orders, others (Mark, Luke, Matthew; Luke, Matthew, Mark; Luke, Mark, Matthew) have been proposed, and more recent combinations (such as those advocated by Calmel, Zahn, Belser, and Bonaccorsi) have also been suggested.

In *Therapeutae*: St. John Never in Asia Minor, George Reber evinces that the order the gospels were composed is the same as their placement in the canon: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as each one appears to correct the previous texts' mistakes, likely pointed out by critics along the way. Says Reber, "The blunders and mistakes of the first Gospel [Matthew] made it necessary that there should be a second." Reber further states, "Mark copies Matthew, and Luke uses the words of both." Concerning the gospel of Matthew, Reber also remarks that the book "the source of all" was "not written in Judea, or by one who knew anything of geography of the country, or the history of the Jews." "Whoever the writer may have been," he continues, "it is evident that he received his education at the college at Alexandria, where Medicine and Divinity were taught, and regarded as inseparable."

Despite claims to the contrary, little in New Testament scholarship is set in stone, including not only the priority of the gospels but also the dating. In reality, the majority of modern bible scholars have simply gone along with the dates of c. 70-110 CE, in spite of the fact that there is no evidence of the gospels' existence until a century later, as evinced by such notables as Bronson Keeler, author of *A Short History of the Bible*; the Christian Judge Charles Waite in *History of the Christian Religion to the Year Two*

Hundred; and Walter Cassels in *Supernatural Religion*. Cassels's knowledge on the subject was so startlingly profound that, when his book was first released anonymously, other scholars—including Christian detractors—believed him to be a bishop. Regarding the orthodox dates (70-110), which were already established by his time at the end of the 19th century, Cassels states, "It is evident that the dates assigned by apologists are wholly arbitrary."

Justin Martyr (c. 100-c. 165-167)

Justin Martyr Although a number of writers and apologists have argued that Justin Martyr is the first Christian writer to be cognizant of the canonical gospels, in reality Martyr does not quote from the New Testament texts but apparently uses one or more of the same sources employed in the creation of the gospels, as well as other texts long lost. Furthermore, no other writer subsequent to Martyr shows any awareness of the existence of the gospels until around the year 180. It should also be noted that Martyr's works did not escape the centuries of mutilation and massive interpolation done to virtually every ancient author's works, which makes the disentanglement all that more difficult. Yet, even as it stands, Justin's writing still does not demonstrate knowledge of the canonical gospels.

In dozens of pages, Cassels provides a painstaking and thorough analysis of the Martyr material, using the original Greek text and revealing that Justin often repeats the same quotes, making it appear as if he is quoting "extensively," when, in fact, as the material is pared down, very little is left germane to the quest of whether or not the canonical gospels existed in his time. In the end, there is a mere handful of Martyr's sentences that Christian authorities have attempted to hold up as evidence for the gospels' existence: For example, biblical scholar Tischendorf "only cites two passages in support of his affirmation that Justin makes use of our first Gospel."

A number of the passages in Justin that purportedly correspond to New Testament scriptures come from a text called "Memoirs of the Apostles," which, Cassels shows, is a book by that title, not a reference to several "memoirs" or apostolic gospels. The "Memoirs," in other words, "constitutes a single text like the 'Acts of the Apostles.'" Upon examination, the quotes Justin uses from the Memoirs "differ more or less widely" from parallel scriptures in the synoptics, Matthew, Mark and Luke. As confirmed by Tischendorf, only a couple of short exceptions are sufficiently similar to warrant comparison with the synoptic gospels. These various passages from the Memoirs or "Memorabilia" are repeated often enough that it is clear Justin is quoting them verbatim, rather than paraphrasing; yet, they are not identical to gospel scriptures, differing enough that they could not have come from those books. "There is almost invariably some difference," says Keeler "either in sense or construction, showing that Justin's book was different from our Gospels." Also, several of the Memoirs scriptures do not appear in any form in the canonical gospels. Moreover, Justin's version of the gospel tale and the Church history in its details is different from and contradictory to that found in the New Testament.

Per the extant archaeological evidence and literary record, the gospel story itself does not even make its appearance in detail until the time of Justin around 140-150 CE. Even

so, it is evident that Martyr did not refer Marcion of Pontus imago to the four gospels. Nor did he address the apostles as we know them from the New Testament tales, which is peculiar considering that Justin opposed the Docetist Marcion, whose Gospel of the Lord was also "Paul's gospel" although not the "veiled gospel" of the Pauline epistles. Oddly enough, particularly since he does attack Marcion, who considered Paul the "truest apostle," Justin never refers to Paul. Also, despite his illusion to the Gospel of Peter, Martyr depicts virtually nothing of the chief apostle. Indeed, Reber remarks that Justin is "so oblivious of Peter that he seems to have been unconscious of his existence." Concerning these important developments, Johnson remarks that the "Memorabilia do not coincide on their contents as a whole with any work that has come down to us; nor are the Apostles' identifiable with any known historical person." He then explains that the term "apostle" is Jewish and pre-Christian, referring to wandering Jews of the Diaspora (Jewish dispersion throughout the Roman Empire), and that the Memorabilia may simply be their "moral sayings."

In addition, rather than being sloppy in his citations, which is the accusation made to explain why his "Memoirs" differs so much from the gospels, Justin is surprisingly consistent and conscientious in his quotation. For example, Martyr quotes from the Old Testament 314 instances, 197 of which he names the particular book or author, equaling an impressive two-thirds of the total amount. Several of the other 117 instances may not have needed citation, "considering the nature of the passage." Despite his remarkably fastidious record, when Justin is supposedly quoting the New Testament, he mentions none of the four gospels. Instead, he distinctly states that the quotes are from the "Memoirs." Since he is careful in his quotation of the Old Testament, it is reasonable to assume that he is accurately citing the "Memoirs" and that such a book is not the same as any of the texts found in the New Testament. There could be no reason why Martyr would not cite the gospel books by name, unless he was not using them. Since he never mentions the four gospels, it is logical to assert that he had never heard of them. Thus, the Memoirs text is not the same as the canonical gospels, and the mention of and quotation from this book does not serve as evidence of the existence of the gospels.

One absurd notion propounded as a result of the concession that Justin did not use the canonical gospels is that he did in fact possess the texts but never saw fit to refer to them or their authors, while willfully changing their words. This argument, were it true, would reflect intense "disregard and disrespect for the Gospels," especially since it is further argued that Justin altered them as he wished, discarding various parts and adding to the tale in other places. Nor, if these precious gospels existed at his time, did Justin show any respect for their purported authors, as he never named them. Once he mentions "John," but it is evident that he does not associate any gospel with that name. Concluding that Justin "knows no authoritative writings except the Old Testament," Johnson adds that "he had neither our Gospels' nor our Pauline writings"

Infancy Gospel image In addition to the Memoirs, a single, non-canonical text apparently lost, Justin utilized other sources, including the mysterious Gospel of the Hebrews, which was widely read in Palestine during the second century and which in reality predates the canonical gospels. Per Cassels, the Gospel of the Hebrews was also

called "the Gospel according to the Apostles," which suggests it was the same text as the Memoirs of the Apostles. Other texts used by Justin include the Acts of Pilate (Gospel of Nicodemus), which he cited, and the Protevangelion and Gospel of the Infancy, as shown by Waite, among others. Justin also likely used the Gospel of Peter or "Memoirs of Peter," as he alludes to it, demonstrating that by "Memoirs " the Church father did indeed mean a single text. Another source for Justin's "narrative" is the Sibylline Oracles, which reflect essential points of the gospel tale. The Church father even proudly refers to the Greek prophetess, saying "the Sybil not only expressly and clearly foretells the future coming of our Savior Jesus Christ, but also all things that should be done by him." Justin's comments, of course, imply that by his time Jesus still had not come.

In actuality, the word "Gospels" appears only once in all of Justin's extant works, found in The First Apology (ch. LXVI), where the phrase occurs "which are called Gospels." This phrase is evidently an interpolation, of which, it must be recalled, there were many in the works of not only Justin Martyr but also practically every ancient author. The phrase is extraneous and gratuitous to the subject matter of the rest of the paragraph. To repeat, it is also the only instance the term "Gospels" is found in Justin 's entire works. Martyr does use the word "Gospel" thrice in his Dialogue, but the term there refers not to the Memoirs or other texts but to the Gospel, i.e. the "Good News" of Jesus Christ. He also refers to the Gospel in one of the fragments of his lost work on the Resurrection, but these few are the only times the word appears in Justin 's known writings.

Concerning the early use of the word "Gospel," Ellegard evinces that it referred to the "florilegia, anthologies of Biblical passages, which were evidently popular reading among the Saints," i.e., the Jewish Messianic Hagioi who made up the elders of the pre-Christian churches of God found scattered throughout the empire. The Hagioi, Johnson avers, are tangential to the Hosioi, who likewise morphed into Christians.

Regarding the worth of Justin Martyr's works in establishing the existence of the canonical gospels in his day, Waite concludes:

When it is considered that no one of the canonical gospels is expressly mentioned, nor [any] of the supposed writers, except John, and he under such circumstances as negative [sic] the presumption that Justin knew of him as the author of a gospel—that Justin refers by name to the writers of the Old Testament Scriptures nearly 200 times - that from a large number of quotations from written accounts of the sayings of Christ, only two or three agree literally with the canonical gospels that in nearly all cases, parallel passages can only be obtained by patching together different passages, and sometimes from different gospels—that Justin quotes sayings of Christ not in the canonical gospels that he refers to incidents in the life of Jesus, not found at all in those gospels, but which are in other known gospels - and finally that he cites two or three such by name, and one of them as authority for the miracles of Jesus; it cannot be denied that the evidence that the canonical gospels were unknown to Justin Martyr is very strong, and indeed, well high conclusive. (Emphasis added.)

Hence, with their absence in Justin's works, we remain with the dating of the gospels to the last quarter of the second century. Again, the clue to determining who wrote the gospels lies in this late dating—scholars have been wishfully looking in the wrong century.

The Memoirs of the Apostles reveals not the canonical gospels and their purported apostolic authors or scribes; rather, it is a text reflecting the efforts of religious Jews of the Diaspora who had established a pre-Christian "Church of God" with branches in various places, including the brotherhood sites addressed by "Paul." These anonymous Jews were eventually morphed into the New Testament apostles. Concerning this ecclesiastical organization revealed in Justin's works, Johnson concludes that here was a "class of Sectarians or Haereticks equally to be distinguished from orthodox Jews, as from the orthodox Christians." These could have been "Ebionites" or "Gnostics," but their distinctive features included "the attitude in which they stood towards the ancestral traditions of the Fathers, Circumcision, the Sabbath, the fast-days, the Temple and the sacrificial rites." Renouncing these traditions, "they dream of a universal Jewish Church, into which the strangers shall have gathered, as the new branch is grafted into the noble stock of the ancient Vine." Johnson next avers that "Philo may well be called the first Father of such a Church."

In addition to these pre-existing Apostles are Messianic Saints, the Elect, and the Congregation/Church (ecclesia)—terms and concepts all found within texts such as the Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Jesus (Ecclesiasticus), the Book of Tobit and the Book of Enoch, as well as the Didache, Epistle of Barnabas and Shepherd of Hermas, all of which Johnson clearly shows to be pre-Christian texts later Christianized. These texts belong not to "Judeo-Christians" but to these "heretical" Messianic proto-Christians who already possessed an ecclesia/church, "comprising the Dispersed through the world." Said individuals thus broke "with the old observances of Judaism The conception of a New People and a New Land published to all the world has dawned upon them." This "New People" were at some point in Egypt styled the "Therapeuts." Another such pre-Christian and probably Therapeutan text was The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles, which "cites Christ's words, such as stand in the Gospels, but not as sayings of Jesus." In other words, the text is one of the sources used by the gospel writers, originally not applicable to the "historical" Jesus but changed to revolve around him. It is likely that Justin Martyr, a Samaritan born at the sacred Israelite site of Shechem, whence came many of the ancestors of the Egypto-Hebrew monkish sect of the Therapeuts, was referring to a Therapeutan text called the "Memoirs of the Apostles."

For the rest and for citations, see *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled*.

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Who is the Virgin Mary?
by Acharya S/D.M. Murdock

The following article is excerpted from:

Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled

suns of god cover image

Moon Mary: Queen of Heaven

"The goddesses have stories to tell. One such story—far too long ignored—is that, in their original, unadulterated form, they were parthenogenetic. The word parthenogenesis comes from the Greek parthenos, 'virgin' more or less, and gignesthai, 'to be born.' It means, essentially, to be born of a virgin—that is, without the participation of a male. For a goddess to be 'parthenogenetic' thus means that she stands as a primordial creatrix, who requires no male partner to produce the cosmos, earth, life, matter and even other gods out of her own essence. Plentiful evidence shows that in their earliest cults, before they were subsumed under patriarchal pantheons as the wives, sisters and daughters of male gods, various female deities of the ancient Mediterranean world were indeed considered self-generating, virgin creatrices."

Dr. Marguerite Rigoglioso, Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity (1)

"There is but one god and goddess, but many are their powers and names: Jupiter, Sol, Apollo, Moses, Christ, Luna, Ceres, Proserpina, Tellus, Mary. But have a care in speaking these things. They should be hidden in silence as are the Eleusinian mysteries; sacred things must needs be wrapped in fable and enigma."

Konrad Muth (1471-1526)

Virgin Mary adored in heaven As is the case with Jesus Christ himself, the godman's parents, Joseph and Mary, never appear in the contemporary historical record of the time they allegedly existed. Nor are they mentioned in non-gospel Christian writings earlier than the purported time of Church father Ignatius (d. 107 CE). Oddly enough, the Islamic sacred text, the Koran, places Jesus and Mary in the same era as Moses, or the 13th century BCE. Arabs believed that Jesus was Joshua, the Old Testament prophet, and that Joshua's mother was "Mirzam," the Miriam of Exodus, sister of Moses and Aaron. (Robertson, CM, 297) In this regard, Joshua is Jesus in Greek, and both Mirzam and Miriam are equivalent to Mariam or Mary. As Strong's Concordance (Gk. 3137) relates: "Mary or Miriam='their rebellion.'" The Persians likewise believed that Joshua's mother was the Mosaic Miriam. Hence, according to Near Eastern tradition there appeared a Jesus, son of Mary, over a thousand years prior to the Christian era. Moreover, like Jesus, who was called "Emmanuel" (Mt. 1:23), a "Persian title of 'the god Immani,' or E-mani,' venerated in Elam as a sacred king-martyr," the Persian savior Mani was said to have been "born of a virgin named Mary." (Walker, 428)

The Virgin Goddess

In reality, the ancient world abounded with traditions, prophecies, fables and myths of miraculous conceptions and births, long before the Christian era, and the virgin-mother motif is common enough in pre-Christian cultures to demonstrate its unoriginality and non-historicity within Christianity. In early Christian times, Mary herself was believed to have been born of a virgin, which, if taken literally, would represent a virgin [or

miraculous] birth prior to Christ, rendering his own nativity unoriginal and mundane, rather than miraculous and divine. One source of Mary's immaculate conception was Christian writer and saint John of Damascus (c. 676-c. 754-787), who asserted that Mary's parents were "filled and purified by the Holy Ghost, and freed from sexual concupiscence." Concerning this matter, the Catholic Encyclopedia ("Immaculate Conception") states that "even the human element" of Mary's origin, "the material of which she was formed, was pure and holy." In other words, Roman Catholic doctrine dictates that, like Jesus, "the Blessed Virgin Mary" was "conceived without sin." (Hackwood, 17) In order to maintain the "uniqueness" of Christ's virgin birth, however, this contention regarding Mary is not taken seriously. What it proves, nonetheless, is that fabulous Christian claims are based on pious speculation, not historical fact, speculation by the faithful that changes from era to era, depending on the need.

Virgin Mary adored in heavenAs it turns out, the Virgin Mary is, like Jesus Christ, a mythical character, founded upon older goddesses. Following on the heels of goddesses such as Aphrodite, Astarte, Cybele, Demeter, Hathor, Inanna, Ishtar and Isis, Mary is "both virgin and mother, and, like many of them, she gives birth to a half-human, half-divine child, who dies and is reborn." (Baring, 548) Regarding the Great Mother Goddess, upon whom Mary is based and whose names are legion, in *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity* (II, 45) Francis Legge says:

"Her most prominent characteristics show her to be a personification of the Earth, the mother of all living, ever bringing forth and ever a virgin..."

In *Pagan and Christian Creeds* (159-161), Edward Carpenter recites a long list of virgin mothers:

Zeus, Father of the gods, visited Semele...in the form of a thunderstorm; and she gave birth to the great saviour and deliverer Dionysus. Zeus, again, Danae impregnated by Zeus as a golden shower. Greek Red Figure ware, c. 5th cent. BCE impregnated Danae in a shower of gold; and the child was Perseus... Devaki, the radiant Virgin of the Hindu mythology, became the wife of the god Vishnu and bore Krishna, the beloved hero and prototype of Christ. With regard to Buddha, St. Jerome says: "It is handed down among the Gymnosophists of India that Buddha, the founder of their system, was brought forth by a Virgin from her side." The Egyptian Isis, with the child Horus on her knee, was honored centuries before the Christian era, and worshipped under the names of "Our Lady," "Queen of Heaven," "Star of the Sea," "Mother of God," and so forth. Before her, Neith the Virgin of the World, whose figure bends from the sky over the earthly plains and the children of men, was acclaimed as mother of the great god Osiris...

The old Teutonic goddess Hertha (the Earth) was a Virgin, but was impregnated by the heavenly Spirit (the Sky); and her image with a child in her arms was to be seen in the sacred groves of Germany. The Scandinavian Frigga, in much the same way, being caught in the embraces of Odin, the All-father, conceived and bore a son, the blessed Balder, healer and saviour of mankind. Quetzalcoatl, the (crucified) saviour of the Aztecs, was the son of Chimalman, the Virgin Queen of Heaven. Even the Chinese had

a mother-goddess and virgin with child in her arms; and the ancient Etruscans the same...

Black Madonna and Child, Anjony, France, c. 17th cent. (Photo: Francis Debaisieux) In addition to the omnipresent mother-and-child imagery beginning at least five millennia ago are the black virgin-mother statues found all over the Mediterranean and especially in Italian churches, representing the very ancient Egyptian goddess Isis, as well as the later Mary, having been refigured or "baptized anew" as the Jewish Mother of God. Concerning this development, in its article the "Virgin Birth of Christ" the Catholic Encyclopedia ("CE") remarks:

"A first class of writers have recourse to pagan mythology in order to account for the early Christian tradition concerning the virgin birth of Jesus. Usener argues that the early Gentile Christians must have attributed to Christ what their pagan ancestors had attributed to their pagan heroes; hence the Divine sonship of Christ is a product of the religious thought of Gentile Christians.... Conrady found in the Virgin Mary a Christian imitation of the Egyptian goddess Isis, the mother of Horus..."

Concerning the usurpation of the Virgin Mother by Christianity, which simply constituted the changing of the goddess from one ethnicity to another, in *The Paganism in Our Christianity* (121-123) apologist Sir Arthur Weigall observes:

"Isis nursing her Divine Son, Horus...while the story of the death and resurrection of Osiris may have influenced the thought of the earliest Christians in regard to the death and resurrection of our Lord, there can be no doubt that the myths of Isis had a direct bearing upon the elevation of Mary, the mother of Jesus, to her celestial position in the Roman Catholic theology... In her aspect as the mother of Horus, Isis was represented in tens of thousands of statuettes and paintings, holding the divine child in her arms; and when Christianity triumphed these paintings and figures became those of the Madonna and Child without any break in continuity: no archaeologist, in fact, can now tell whether some of these objects represent the one or the other."

Like the Christian Mary and Egyptian Isis, the Canaanite goddess Astarte, mentioned in the Old Testament, was the "Virgin of the Sea," as well as the "blessed Mother and Lady of the Waters." (Baring, 459) Another virgin goddess was the mother of the Phrygian god Attis, whose widespread worship "must have influenced the early Christians." As Weigall (115-116) recounts:

Attis was the Good Shepherd, the son of Cybele, the Great Mother, or alternatively, of the Virgin Nana, who conceived him without union with mortal man, as in the story of the Virgin Mary... In Rome the festival of his death and resurrection was annually held from March 22nd to 25th; and the connection of this religion with Christianity is shown by the fact that in Phrygia, Gaul, Italy and other countries where Attis-worship was powerful, the Christians adopted the actual date, March 25th, as the anniversary of our Lord's passion.

The pre-Christian virgin goddess Myrrha was the mother of the god Adonis, who

tradition holds was born at Bethlehem, "in the same sacred cave that Christians later claimed as the birthplace of Jesus." Indeed, Myrrha was "identified with Mary by early Christians who called Jesus's mother Myrrh of the Sea." (Walker, 10)

Buddha born through the side of his mother, Maya. Gandharan frieze, 2nd cent. AD/CE Also a product of a virgin birth, the Indian avatar Buddha's conception is portrayed as coming to his mother, Maya, in a dream, similar to the conflicting gospel tales of Joseph's dream or the angel appearing to Mary. Regarding Buddha, in *Christianity Before Christ* (87) Dr. John Jackson states:

"He was said to have been born of the Virgin Maya, or Mary. His incarnation was accomplished by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Virgin Maya. The infant Buddha, soon after birth, spoke to his mother, saying: 'I will put to an end to the sufferings and sorrows of the world.' As these words are uttered, a mystical light surrounded the infant Messiah."

This mythical theme is not uncommon, as the birth through the side of the virgin was also claimed of Jesus by early Christian "heretics." It was likewise said that Julius Caesar was born through the "side of his mother," whence comes the term "Caesarean section." So too was the Egyptian sun god Ra "born from the side of his mother" (Bonwick, 107), a motif that reflects the relationship between the sun and moon. Part of the "lunar phenomenon," the mother's womb symbolizes the moon, in which the solar child can be seen growing. Hence, Buddha's mother, Maya, was depicted as transparent, as was the pregnant Mary, "as may be seen in Didron's Iconography!" (Massey, 181)

Like Buddha's mother, Queen Maya, the carpenter's wife Mary is also a "queen," as in "Queen of Heaven." Precursor of Mary, the immensely popular Isis's status as "Queen of Heaven" was established eons before, and continued well into, the common era. In his Latin novel of the second century ce, *The Golden Ass* (XI.2), Lucius Apuleius describes Isis's introduction of herself to the "hapless quadruped" as follows:

"I am she that is the natural mother of all things, mistress and governess of all the elements, the initial progeny of worlds, chief of the powers divine, queen of heaven, the principal of the gods celestial, the light of the goddesses. At my will the planets of the air, the wholesome winds of the seas and the silences of hell are disposed. My name, my divinity, is adored throughout the world, in divers manners, in variable customs and in many names, for the Phrygians call me the mother of the gods; the Athenians, Minerva; the Cyprians, Venus; the Candians, Diana; the Sicilians, Proserpina; the Eleusinians, Ceres; some Juno, others Bellona, others Hecate; and principally the Ethiopians who dwell in the Orient, and the Egyptians...do call me Queen Isis." (Siculus, 31fn)

As can be seen, Isis was fervently revered as the epitome of Divinity, long before Mary achieved that rank.

Winged Isis in cruciform, Tomb of Seti I

Mary, Goddess of the Moon

The virgin-goddess "Queen of Heaven" is prevalent in the ancient world for the reason that she is astrological or astrotheological, symbolizing the moon, the earth, Venus, Virgo and the dawn. The many goddesses thus resolve themselves to variants on a theme, one of which is the moon, a feature of the ubiquitous sun-god mythos, in which the moon, by mirroring the sun's light, "gives birth" to the sun. In Christ Lore (30-31), Hackwood describes the astrotheological development of this theme:

Virgin Mary with Stars atop a Crescent Moon. Albrecht Durer "The Virgin Mary is called not only the Mother of God, but the Queen of Heaven. This connects her directly with astronomic lore. The ornamentation of many continental churches often includes a representation of the Sun and Moon "in conjunction," the Moon being therein emblematical of the Virgin and Child....

"As the Moon...is the symbol of Mary, Queen of Heaven, so also a bright Star sometimes symbolizes him whose star was seen over Jerusalem by the Wise Men from the East.

"The many depictions of Mary with the crescent moon reflect her status as the ancient moon goddess, exemplified by the Egyptian goddess Isis."

In his book dating to the first century BCE on Egyptian antiquities, Greek writer Diodorus Siculus (14-15) affirms that the Egyptian god Osiris symbolizes the sun while his wife/sister, Isis, is the moon:

"Now when the ancient Egyptians, awestruck and wondering, turned their eyes to the heavens, they concluded that Isis with moon and lunar horns nursing Horus two gods, the sun and the moon, were primeval and eternal; and they called the former Osiris, the latter Isis, assigning each of these names according to some relevant characteristic...

"...Now Isis, in translation, signifies "ancient"—a name bestowed for her ancient and immortal origin. They depict horns on her head, both from the moon's horned appearance when in its crescent, and because the horned cow is sacred to her among the Egyptians."

Concerning Isis's prototype, the Egyptian lunar virgin goddess Neith, who predated the Christian era by millennia, in *The Ancient Gods* (84) Rev. James observes:

...She too was the virgin mother of the Sun-god, having given birth to Re [Ra] as the great cow, and was identified with Isis as the wife of Osiris, later becoming one of the forms of Hathor. Indeed, she was "the Great Goddess, the mother of all the gods."...

...She was eternal, self-existing, self-sustaining and all-pervading, personifying the female principle from very early times. She was believed to have brought forth the transcendent Sun-god without the aid of a male partner, very much as in the Memphite

Theology Ptah created all things virtually ex nihilo by thinking as the "heart" and commanding as the "tongue."

The virgin-mother goddess represents not only the moon but also the constellation of Virgo. This important information regarding the Virgin is found in ancient texts, such as the Eclogues (37 BCE) of the Roman poet Virgil, in which is described or "prophesied" the "return of the virgin," i.e., Virgo, who would bring about "a new breed of men sent down from heaven," as well as the birth of a boy "in whom...the golden race [shall] arise." This virgin-born "golden boy" is in actuality the sun.

Commenting on the Virgo-Sun relationship, the author of Christianity Mythology Unveiled (CMU, 105) notes:

In the ancient zodiacs of India and Egypt, there is seen this virgin nursing a male child, with sun rays around his head...which is emblematical of the infant sun at the winter solstice, and of his being then in the sign of the Virgo.

Regarding the solar nativity, in The Golden Bough (416) Sir Frazer further explicates:

Egyptian Virgo, from Oedipus Judaicus by DrummondThe ritual of the nativity, as it appears to have been celebrated in Syria and Egypt, was remarkable. The celebrants retired into certain inner shrines, from which at midnight they issued with a loud cry, "The Virgin has brought forth! The light is waxing!" The Egyptians even represented the new-born sun by the image of an infant which on his birthday, the winter solstice, they brought forth and exhibited to his worshippers. No doubt the Virgin who thus conceived and bore a son on the twenty-fifth of December was the great Oriental goddess whom the Semites called the Heavenly Virgin or simply the Heavenly Goddess...

As does Latin authority Macrobius (5th cent. CE), the Paschal Chronicle recounts that the newborn sun (Horus) was presented to the public every year at the winter solstice, as a babe in a manger. The pertinent part of the Chronicle reads as follows:

"To this day, Egypt has consecrated the pregnancy of a virgin, and the nativity of her son, whom they annually present in a cradle, to the adoration of the people; and when king Ptolemy, three hundred and fifty years before our Christian era, demanded of the priests the significance of this religious ceremony, they told him it was a mystery." (CMU, 100)

The Chronicle author(s) further confirms that Christianity is a continuation of the ancient astrotheological religion when he states that the "Annunciation of our Lady," i.e., the conception of Christ by the Virgin Mary, occurred on March 25th, the vernal equinox, exactly nine months prior to the December 25th birthdate, at the winter solstice. (CP, 166)

Virgin Mary, Clothed in the Sun, While the masses have been kept in the dark, the knowledgeable elite have been aware of what the Virgin truly represents, even as they have attempted sophistically to explain "her" relationship to the "earthly" life of "our

Lord." Concerning the astrotheological nature of the gospel story, including the virgin birth/immaculate conception, the famous Christian theologian and saint Albertus Magnus, or Albert the Great (1193?-1280), admitted:

"We know that the sign of the celestial Virgin did come to the horizon at the moment where we have fixed the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. All the mysteries of the incarnation of our Saviour Christ; and all the circumstances of his marvellous life, from his conception to his ascension, are to be traced out in the constellations, and are figured in the stars." (CMU, 97-98)

The virgin birth thus refers to the hour of midnight, December 25th, when the constellation of Virgo rises on the horizon.

Assumption of the Virgin Mary Another example of the ancient astrotheology appears in the observance of the "Assumption of the Virgin," celebrated in Catholicism on August 15th, when the Virgin Mary was "assumed" or "taken up." The observance is not representative of an actual event that happened to an historical character but commemorates the time when the constellation of the Virgin is "rendered invisible by the solar rays." (Higgins, 6) In other words, the summer sun's brightness blots out Virgo. Mary's Nativity, observed on September 8th, occurs when the constellation is visible again.

The goddess is not only the moon and Virgo but also the dawn, who daily gives birth to the sun. By eminent Christian Egyptologist E.A. Wallis Budge's assessment (cxiv), the versatile Isis is likewise "the deity of the dawn," which, according to very ancient mythology, would make her "inviolable" and "eternal," i.e., a perpetual virgin. Even Christian writers have understood the connection between the Virgin and the dawn, as exemplified in "one of the homilies of St. Amedus on the Virgin," which includes the following regarding Mother Mary:

"She is the Fountain that waters the whole earth, the Dawn that precedes the True Sun. She is the health (salus) of all, the reconciler (conciliatrix) of the whole world, the inventress of grace, the generatrix of life, the mother of salvation." (Lundy, 221)

Isis suckling Horus, Mary nursing Jesus As is evident, the worship of the Virgin Isis was eventually and nearly seamlessly transformed into that of the Virgin Mary:

"The worship of the Virgin as the Theotokos or Mother of God, which was introduced into the Catholic Church about the time of the destruction of the Serapeum, enabled the devotees of Isis to continue unchecked their worship of the mother goddess by merely changing the name of the object of their adoration, and Prof. Drexler gives a long list of the statues of Isis which thereafter were used, sometimes with unaltered attributes, as those of the Virgin Mary." (Legge, I, 85)

As Weigall (204-208) elucidates, Christianity in general constitutes a rehash of Paganism:

From Pagan mythology Christianity had unconsciously taken over many a wonderful story and had incorporated it into the life of Jesus...

...many of the old heathen gods had been taken into the Church as saints. Castor and Pollux became St. Cosmo and St. Damien; Dionysos, many of whose attributes were attached to St. John the Baptist, still holds his place as St. Denis of Paris... All over Christendom, pagan sacred places were perpetuated by the erection of Christian chapels or churches on the same sites; and there are hundreds of shrines dedicated to the Madonna on ground once sacred to nymphs or goddesses, while the holy wells or springs of heathendom are now the holy wells of the Church. The statues of Jupiter and Apollo became those of St. Peter and St. Paul; and the figures of Isis were turned into those of the Virgin Mary...

Not only was the worship of Isis usurped by that of Mary but also the countless apparitions believed by prior worshippers to be the Egyptian goddess were subsequently asserted to be appearances by the Virgin Mary. Although many Christians feel that such visions of "Mary" and "Jesus" prove the validity of their belief system, the fact is that apparitions of numerous gods and goddesses to their millions of followers have been quite common globally, in a wide variety of cultures, beginning centuries and millennia prior to the Christian era. The purported appearance of a god or goddess does not, therefore, prove the validity of any particular religion, or it would ensue that every faith in which believers have allegedly seen their god or gods would constitute the "one, true religion."

In the end, like her Son the Sun, the Virgin Moon Mary is a mythical character based on older goddesses who were themselves astrotheological personifications of celestial and earthly bodies and principles. In its most poetic, feminine manifestation, the ancient astrotheology reached exquisite zeniths befitting the Divine Mother of All, flawlessly formless beyond all cultural camouflage and ethnic exteriority.

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For more information, including citations, see Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled.

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[Who was Mary Magdalene?](#)

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[Mary Magdalene](#)

The mammoth success of The Da Vinci Code book and movie has propelled into the spotlight one of the world's most interesting figures, Mary Magdalene. In the gospel story, it is not to any of the apostles that the risen Jesus first appears but to Mary Magdalene, a momentous occasion that surely should have cemented her place as one of the most important people in history. The fact that it did not speaks volumes about the blatant disregard for women within the major monolithic religions, even in the face of the reverence for the Virgin Mary within Catholicism. Obviously, a "virgin mother" must be much more highly regarded than a common prostitute, which is what Mary Magdalene is assumed to have been. The recent fracas surrounding The Da Vinci Code revolves around the tradition that the precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ not triple goddess symbol only associated with this prostitute but married her and sired children with her. Nevertheless, despite all this intrigue, is Mary Magdalene really a "historical" character? It appears that the Magdalene is in reality one of the Triple Faces of the Goddess, worshipped within so-called Pagan cultures long before the Christian era.

(The following information regarding Mary Magdalene is excerpted from my book *The Christ Conspiracy: The Greatest Story Ever Sold*.)

In the New Testament, the "whore" Mary Magdalene has a pivotal role, as despite her alleged unworthiness Magdalene holds the honor of anointing the new king, Jesus, with oil, an act that makes him the Christ and makes her a priestess. It is also Mary Magdalene, and not his male apostles, to whom Jesus first appears after the miracle of his resurrection. In the early Gnostic-Christian gospels Mary Magdalene is the most beloved disciple of Jesus. Some traditions asserted that Jesus and Mary were lovers who created a bloodline, to which a number of groups have laid claim. Nevertheless, like Jesus and the twelve, Magdalene is not a historical character but an element of the typical solar myth/sacred king drama: the sacred harlot. As such, she was highly revered, which explains why she is given top honors in the gospel story. As Barbara Walker states in *The Women's Encyclopedia of Books and Secrets*:

Thus it seems Mary the Whore was only another form of Mary the Virgin, otherwise the Triple Goddess Mari-Anna-Ishtar, the Great Whore of Babylon who was worshipped along with her savior-son in the Jerusalem temple. The Gospel of Mary said all three Marys of the canonical books were one and the same... The seven "devils" exorcised from Mary Magdalene seem to have been the seven Maskim, or Anunnaki, Sumero-Akkadian spirits of the seven nether spheres, born of the Goddess Mari... Mary Magdalene Jesus Tomb image

The Gospels say no men attended Jesus's tomb, but only Mary Magdalene and her women. Only women announced Jesus's resurrection. This was because men were barred from the central mysteries of the Goddess. Priestesses announced the successful conclusion of the rites, and the Savior's resurrection. The Bible says the male apostles knew nothing of Jesus's resurrection, and had to take the women's word for it (Luke 24:10-11). The apostles were ignorant of the sacred tradition and didn't even realize a resurrection was expected: "They knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." (John 20:9)"

Walker also relates:

Mary alone was the first to observe and report the alleged miracle. In just such a manner, pagan priestesses had been announcing the resurrection of saviors gods like Orpheus, Dionysus, Attis, and Osiris every year for centuries.... Mary Magdalene was described as a harlot; but in those times, harlots and priestesses were often one and the same. A sacred harlot in the Gilgamesh epic was connected with a victim-hero in a similar way: "The harlot who anointed you with fragrant ointment laments for you now."... Under Christianity, priests soon took over all the rituals that had been conducted by women, declaring that women had no right to lead any religious ceremony whatever.

Of course, this exclusion and degradation of women is in direct defiance of Jesus's rebuke of Judas, in which he is made to say that the woman who anointed him would be remembered in all the nations. And she should be remembered for good reason, for "the

Christian derivative of Mari-Ishtar, is Mary Magdalene, the sacred harlot who said harlots are 'compassionate of all the race of mankind.'"

Virgin Mary's house at Ephesus, TurkeyThe legends surrounding Mary Magdalene have led to claims of descent from her womb: For example, she and Jesus were lovers who sired a "royal family" in Europe, per the "Priory of Sion mystery." Walker says of the various Marian legends:

Much Christian myth-making went into the later history of Mary Magdalene. She was said to have lived for a while with the virgin Mary at Ephesus. This story probably was invented to account for the name Maria associated with the Ephesian Goddess. Afterward, Mary Magdalene went to Marseilles, another town named after the ancient sea-mother Mari. Her cult centered there. Bones were found at Vézelay and declared to be hers. Her dwelling was a cave formerly sacred to the pagans, at St. Baume (Holy Tree).

It should be noted that the above was written around 1998, long before The Da Vinci Code was released. As we know, the tradition of Mary Magdalene being the progenitor of royal families has been around a while. Despite the fervent wishes of said royal families, who have used these tall tales in order to determine their "divine right to rule," it is apparent that Mary Magdalene is not a historical character who could have mated with anyone but a popular form of the mythical Goddess widely esteemed centuries prior to the Christian era.

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When Was the First Christmas?
by D.M. Murdock/Acharya S

Christ's Nativity; Bernardo Dadi, c. 1325-1350; National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

For the past nearly 1,700 years, a significant portion of the Western world has celebrated the day of December 25th as the birth of the divine Son of God and Savior Jesus Christ. Thousands of images have been created, as well as songs, poems and other artistic endeavors, depicting the baby Jesus lying in a manger surrounded by ox and lamb, with the Virgin Mary, Joseph, angels and three Wise Men looking on in wonder at the luminous infant. This imagery, we are told, represents the very first Christmas, when the Lord of the Universe was born on this earth, on the 25th day of December in the year 1 AD/CE. But is this story true?

"O, how wonderfully acted Providence that on that day on which that Sun was born...Christ should be born."

The tradition of "Christmas" or December 25th as the birth of Jesus Christ, the main figure of the New Testament who is believed by nearly two billion Christians worldwide to have been God in the flesh come to save mankind from its sins, is traceable to the late second to third century AD/CE. During that time, the Church father Cyprian (d. 258) remarked (De pasch. Comp., xix): "O, how wonderfully acted Providence that on that day on which that Sun was born...Christ should be born." In other words, the Savior's

birth was being observed at the winter solstice. What is seldom known, however, is that prior to that time, Christ's birth was placed on a variety of days, indicating its non-historicity:

January 5th, January 6th, March 25th, March 28th, April 19th, April 20th, May 20th, August 21st, November 17th and November 19th.

Title page of the 'Chronography of 354'; MS c. 1620 December 25th as Christ's birthday makes its way into a "calendar" or chronology created in 354 AD/CE called the Calendar of Filocalus or Philocalian Calendar. In addition to listing the 25th of December as the Natalis Invicti, which means "Birth of the Unconquered (Sun)," the Calendar also names the day as that of natus Christus in Betleem Iudeae: "Birth of Christ in Bethlehem Judea." Hence, we can see that people of the fourth century were clearly aware of the association, if not identification, of Christ with the sun, as they had been in Cyprian's time and earlier, since Jesus is claimed to be the "Sun of Righteousness" in the Old Testament book of Malachi (4:2).

"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

Over the past few decades, many people have come to understand that "December 25th" represents not the birthday of a "historical" savior named Jesus Christ but the time of the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere, when the day begins to become longer than the night, and the sun is said to be "born again," "renewed" or "resurrected." Numerous Winter-Solstice Celebrations Globally

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By the time Jesus's birth was placed at the winter solstice there had been numerous solstitial celebrations of the coming "new sun" in a wide variety of places. Many winter-solstice festivals can be found listed in my 2010 Astrotheology Calendar, for the month of December. As I write there:

December is full of winter-solstice celebrations beginning in remotest antiquity. For example, the date of December 21st as the festival of the Japanese sun goddess Amaterasu represents her "coming out of the cave," a typical solar myth.

Likewise noteworthy is the festival of the Egyptian baby sun god Sokar occurring on 26 Khoiak, as related in the Calendar of Hathor at Dendera, corresponding at the turn of the common era to December 22nd. The longstanding ritual of Sokar being carried out of the temple on this day in an "ark" closely resembles the censored commentary by Church father Epiphanius (c. 310/320-403) concerning the Egyptians bringing forth the baby sun born of a virgin at the winter solstice.

Sokar the baby sun at the Winter Solstice approached by three dignitaries, Ptah-Osiris-Sokar

The winter-solstice celebrations were so important that at times they exceeded the one or two days of the actual solstice in the Gregorian calendar, i.e., December 21st or 22nd. Solstice celebrations therefore do not necessarily fall on the traditional time of the solstice but may occur up to several days before or after, such as is exemplified by the Roman celebration of Saturnalia, which began on December 17th and ended on the 23rd.

Hence, a "winter solstice" birth as asserted for a number of gods would not necessarily be celebrated on those exact days or even on the more commonly accepted date of December 25th, which signifies the end of a three-day period of the solstice—meaning "sun stands still"—as perceived in ancient times. In this regard, the winter-solstice birthday of the Greek sun and wine god Dionysus was originally recognized in early January but was eventually placed on December 25th, as related by the ancient Latin writer Macrobius (4th cent. ad/ce). Regardless, the effect is the same: The winter sun god is born around this time, when the day begins to become longer than the night.

Nativity of Dionysus: Hermes presents the baby Dionysus to a goddess or mortal woman; two groups of three figures are in attendance on either side; bas relief from the Museum of Naples

In 275 ad/ce, December 25th was formalized by Emperor Aurelian as the birthday of Sol Invictus, the Invincible Sun, and it is claimed that Aurelian likewise combined the Greek festival of the sun god Helios, called the Helia, with Saturnalia as well to establish this solstice celebration. The highly important Mysteries of Osiris, which begin on the 14th of December and end with his resurrection on December 26th, follow a winter-solstice pattern similar to the Brumalia, Saturnalia and Christmas celebrations. The facts that this period comprises several festivities having to do with the passion, death and resurrection or rebirth of this prominent Egyptian sun god, and that the dates for these mysteries happened to correspond to the winter solstice when the wandering Egyptian Calendar was finally fixed, are extraordinary.

How Far Back Do Winter-Solstice Celebrations Go?

Newgrange Passage Tomb/Temple, Ireland; photo: Clemensfranz In my 2011 Astrotheology Calendar, the month of December is illustrated by the "passage tomb" at Newgrange, Ireland, which is oriented to the sunrise on the winter solstice or around December 21st in the Gregorian calendar. This tomb—which has also been called a "temple" based on its evident importance—is guarded by a large boulder with spiral solar symbols and dates to around 3200 BCE. The winter-solstice sunrise at Newgrange sends a shaft of light down the cruciform corridor and chamber. This ceremony is believed to signify the "return to life" or resurrection from the death of winter. In this sacred site is thus a 5,000-year-old "cross of light" representing the resurrection to life or rebirth on "December 25th."

"In the sacred site at Newgrange is a 5,000-year-old 'cross of light' representing the resurrection to life and rebirth on 'December 25th.'"

There are many other archaeological sites globally that are astronomically aligned,

particularly to the winter solstice, some even Goseck circle, Germany; yellow lines represent sunrise and sunset at the winter solstice; c. 7,000 years ago older than Newgrange, such as the wooden circle or "henge" at Goseck, Germany, which may be 7,000 years old. The building of such astronomically aligned edifices, which are widely understood to be "temples" of a sort, indicates that the ancient astrotheological motif of the sun god's birth at the winter solstice is at least that old. Moreover, there is evidence that this solar observation is much older even than that.

The suggestion that the winter-solstice celebration by human beings in several parts of the world, particularly in the farther northern reaches of the northern hemisphere, dates back to Paleolithic times and was part of religious "mysteries" even then is indicated by a number of artifacts, including the painting known as "Sorcerer with the Antelope's Head" from Les Trois Frères caves in the French Pyrenees. As I write in *Suns of God*, these caves were occupied during the Magdalenian period, 10,000-16,000 years ago, although mythologist Robert Graves dates the paintings therein to "at least 20,000 B.C."

In *Prehistoric Lunar Astronomy*, Indian scholar S.B. Roy theorizes that these paintings are representative of secret deposits relating to the mysteries, remarking that they would "necessarily be performed at a particular auspicious moment," upon which their potency would depend. This auspicious moment would be dependent on the solar and lunar phases, as well as the seasons.

Sorcerer with Antelope's Head Les Trois Frères Cave As I also relate in *Suns of God*, Roy further posits that the antelope-headed "sorcerer" was "a figure marking the onset of a season." The reasons for this assertion include that the "remote traditions" in the Rig Veda and in Vedic astronomy relate that the Stag's head represents the star L-Orionis and the winter solstice at the new moon, as well as the summer solstice at the full moon. Roy concludes that the sorcerer figure "marked the winter solstice," which was "a great day in the Ice Age of Europe." Based on the astronomy, the figure dates to 10,600 BCE.

Discussing the European Magdalenian cave-dwellers of around 10,000 years ago, Roy also asserts:

In Northern Europe and Asia, in latitudes of 60° and higher, where Slavonic languages now prevail, the winter was then long and dark. It was very cold. Everyone looked to the day of the winter solstice when the sun would turn North. The astronomers would know the date even though the sun itself was not visible. This was the great day, for the spring would now come.

Thus, the winter solstice was an important factor in human culture, particularly that of the cold, northern latitudes, at least 12,000 years ago.

"'Christmas' is thus an extremely ancient celebration, predating the Christian era by many millennia."

The winter solstice celebration that developed throughout much of the inhabited world

has been handed down as "Christmas," i.e., December 25th, the birthday of the "sun of God." "Christmas" is thus an extremely ancient celebration, predating the Christian era by many millennia.

Have a Happy Solstice!

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Born of a Virgin on December 25th: Horus, Sun God of Egypt

The Star in the East and Three Kings

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Jesus is NOT the "Reason for the Season"

by Acharya S/D.M. Murdock

Jesus sun god in manger

What is the real "reason for the season?"

Excerpted from

Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled

by Acharya S

The December 25th birthday of the sun god is a common motif globally, dating back at least 12,000 years as reflected in winter solstices artfully recorded in caves. "Nearly all nations," says Doane, commemorated the birth of the god Sol to the "Queen of Heaven" and "Celestial Virgin." The winter solstice was celebrated in countless places, including China and Persia, the latter regarding the solar Lord and Savior Mithra's birth. In Rome, a great festival called "Saturnalia" was celebrated from December 1st to the 23rd. The winter solstice festival in Egypt included the babe in a manger brought out of the sanctuary.

Roman god Sol Invictus Regarding the date of the "Christmas Feast," the Catholic Encyclopedia ("Christmas") remarks:

The well-known solar feast...of Natalis Invicti, celebrated on 25 December, has a strong claim on the responsibility for our December date....

The earliest rapprochement of the births of Christ and the sun is in Cypr., "De pasch. Comp.", xix, "...O, how wonderfully acted Providence that on that day on which that Sun was born...Christ should be born." In the fourth century, Chrysostom, "del Solst. Et Æquin." (II, p. 118, ed. 1588), says: "...But Our Lord, too, is born in the month of December...the eight before the calends of January [25 December]... But they call it the 'Birthday of the Unconquered'. Who indeed is so unconquered as Our Lord...? Or, if they say that it is the birthday of the Sun, He is the Sun of Justice." Already Tertullian (Apol., 16; cf. Ad. Nat., I, 13; Orig. c. Cels., VIII, 67, etc) had to assert that Sol was not the Christians' God; Augustine (Tract xxxiv, in Joan. In P. L., XXXV, 1652) denounces the heretical identification of Christ with Sol. Pope Leo I (Serm. xxxvii in nat. dom., VII, 4; xxii, II, 6 in P. L., LIV, 218 and 198) bitterly reproves solar survivals--Christians, on the very doorstep of the Apostles' basilica, turn to adore the rising sun.

Ancient Greeks celebrated the birthday of Hercules and Dionysus on this date, as the ancient authority Macrobius (c. 400 AD/CE) maintained. Even the Greek father god, Zeus, was supposedly born at the winter solstice. The "Christmas" festival was celebrated at Athens and was called "the Lenaea," during which time, apparently, "the death and rebirth of the harvest infant Dionysus were similarly dramatized." This Lenaea festival is depicted in an Aurignacian cave-painting in Spain, with a "young Dionysus with huge genitals," standing naked in the middle of "nine dancing women." The Aurignacian period extended from 34,000 to 23,000 years ago. In The White Goddess (399), mythologist Robert Graves states:

The most ancient surviving record of European religious practices is an Aurignacian cave-painting at Cogul in North-Eastern Spain of the Old Stone Age Lenaea. A young Dionysus with huge genitals stands un-armed, alone and exhausted in the middle of a crescent of nine dancing women, who face him. He is naked, except for what appear to be a pair of close-fitting boots laced at the knee; they are fully clothed and wear small

cone-shaped hats. These wild women, differentiated by their figures and details of their dress, grow progressively older as one looks clock-wise around the crescent...

By using the term "Dionysus," Graves is not stating that it was written on the walls of the cave. He is using it to describe an archetype that is very ancient.

The Greco-Syrian sun god Adonis - the "Adonai" of the Bible - was also born on December 25th, a festival "spoken of by Tertullian, Jerome, and other Fathers of the Church, who inform us that the ceremonies took place in a cave, and that the cave in which they celebrated his mysteries in Bethlehem, was that in which Christ Jesus was born."

Nor is the winter solstice celebration a purely "Pagan" concept, as the Jews also observed it in reference to the birth of their god, Yahweh. The "Feast of Illumination," "Feast of Lights" or "feast of the Dedication," occurred in winter (John 10:22-23; Josephus's Antiquities XII, 7.7)¹ and represented the "ancient Hebrew Winter Solstice Feast." The reference in the gospel of John states:

"It was the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem; it was winter..." (RSV)

The passage in Josephus's Antiquities (XII, 7.7) refers to the eight-day festival celebrated by the Jewish hero Judas Maccabeus (190 BCE-160 BCE), the "festival of the restoration off the sacrifices of the temple." This 8-day festival is called by Josephus simply "Lights," as in the "festival of Lights." Known as "Hannukah," this "feast of Lights" represents a "restoration" of the ancient temple sacrifices.

Regarding this Hannukah feast, in The White Goddess (469), Graves further says:

The rabbinical account is that this eight-day festival which begins on the twenty-fifth day of the month Kislev, was instituted by Judas Maccabeus and that it celebrates a miracle: at the Maccabean consecration of the Temple a small cruse of sacred oil was found, hidden by a former High Priest, which lasted for eight days. By this legend the authors of the Talmud hoped to conceal the antiquity of the feast, which was originally Jehovah's birthday as the Sun-god and had been celebrated at least as early as the time of Nehemiah (Maccabees, I, 18).

The citation in Graves concerning the antiquity of this feast should be 2 Maccabees 1:18, which states:

Since on the twenty-fifth day of Kislev we shall celebrate the purification of the temple, we thought it necessary to notify you, in order that you also may celebrate the feast of booths and the feast of the fire given when Nehemiah, who built the temple and the altar, offered sacrifices.

The biblical figure Nehemiah is reputed to have lived during the fifth century (fl. 430 BCE), and 25th of the month of Kislev (November/December) is indeed the time of the celebration called Hannukah/Chanukah. As 2 Maccabees recounts, during this earlier

sacrifice by Nehemiah, the Persians to whom he had sent for the sacred fire had only given him a "thick liquid" (oil?). After the liquid was sprinkled on the wood, the sun - previously hidden by clouds - beamed brightly, causing a great fire to blaze up, "so that all marveled." At this point, the priests offered fervent prayers to the Lord God.

From the account in the biblical book of Ezekiel concerning the Temple priests holding secret rites - sacrilegious in Ezekiel's opinion - we know that there is an esoteric tradition within Judaism that is not made known to the masses. Graves is apparently suggesting that this esoteric tradition included the knowledge of Jehovah/Yahweh as a sun god - as asserted and demonstrated by numerous authorities and researchers - and that, as a sun god, he too was typically considered as born on the winter solstice. It would appear, therefore, that this "festival of Lights" and "feast of the dedication" was a winter-solstice celebration based on the solar aspect either of the old Israelite gods or elohim, as they are repeatedly termed in the Old Testament, or of the Jewish tribal god Yahweh. (These inferences make for further studies by interested parties. The solar attributes of the main Jewish god Yahweh are brought out in detail in *The Christ Conspiracy and Suns of God*.)

In addition, Indians for millennia have celebrated the winter solstice, as a cardinal point, the new year and, presumably, the birth of the sun god. In the Indian solstice celebration--a "great religious festival"--there is "rejoicing everywhere." As in the West, the Indians "decorate their houses with garlands, and make presents to friends and relatives," a "custom of very great antiquity." One way the Brahman priests of Orissa have celebrated the solstice is by carrying images of "the youthful Krishna to the houses of their disciples and their patrons, to whom they present some of the red powder and tar of roses, and receive presents of money and cloth in return." Thus, in India the winter solstice has been as much a major holiday as it was anywhere, which is to be expected in a land permeated with sun worship for millennia.

Regarding the Persian sun god Mithra and his sacrifice, in the 19th century respected Christian author Rev. J.P. Lundy remarked:

"For let it be borne in mind that it was precisely at the season of this sacrifice, near the beginning of the new year, that the birth of Mithra was celebrated over all Persia and the world, in temple-caves, on the night of the 24th of December, the night of light. Even the British Druids celebrated it, and called the next day, the 25th of December, Nollagh or Noel, the day of regeneration, celebrating it with great fires on tops of their mountains. In fact, all nations, as if by common consent, at the first moment after midnight of the 24th of December, celebrated the birth of the sun-god, type among the Gentiles of Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, as the Desire of all nations and the Saviour of the world."

Lundy was thus well aware of the sun gods, whom he deemed "types of Christ," indicating Christ's solar nature as well.

Concerning the winter solstice festival in Ireland, the author of *Christian Mythology Unveiled* relates:

"The Baal-fire feast, or meeting, was a great festival in Ireland, on the 25th of December, and midsummer eve. Baal, or Bel, was a name of the sun all over the east."

It is important to note that the "December 25th" birthdate only applies to the age and hemisphere in which the winter solstice falls on December 21-24. In other ages, the solstice month is different, changing with the precession of the equinoxes every 2150 years.

The December 25th birthdate is that of the sun, not a "real person," revealing its unoriginality within Christianity and the true nature of the Christian godman. "Christmas" was not incorporated into Christianity until 354 AD/CE. In reality, there is no evidence, no primary sources which show that "Jesus is the reason for the season."

Happy Solstice!

Excerpted from "Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled"

¹ This citation contained a typo that unfortunately ended up in the "Reason for the Season" video. As here, it should be Josephus's Antiquities, XII, 7.7, rather than book XIII.

Further Reading

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Born of a Virgin on December 25th: Horus, Sun God of Egypt

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—David Mills, Atheist Universe

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Dionysus: Born of a Virgin on December 25th, Killed and Resurrected after Three Days
by D.M. Murdock/Acharya S

Disk with Dionysus and 11 signs of the zodiac; 4th cent. BCE; Brindisi, Italy
The Greek god of wine, Dionysus or Bacchus, also called Iacchus, has been depicted as having
been born of a virgin mother on December 25th; performing miracles such as changing
water into wine; appearing surrounded by or one of 12 figures; bearing epithets such as
"Father" and "Savior"; dying; resurrecting after three days; and ascending into heaven.

Dionysus shares the following attributes in common with the Christ character as found
in the New Testament and Christian tradition.

Dionysus was born of a virgin on "December 25th" or the winter solstice.

He is the son of the heavenly Father.

As the Holy Child, Bacchus was placed in a cradle/crib/manger "among beasts."

Dionysus was a traveling teacher who performed miracles.

He was the God of the Vine, and turned water into wine.

Dionysus rode in a "triumphal procession" on an ass.

He was a sacred king killed and eaten in an eucharistic ritual for fecundity and purification.

The god traveled into the underworld to rescue his loved one, arising from the land of the dead after three days.

Dionysus rose from the dead on March 25th and ascended into heaven.

Bacchus was deemed "Father," "Liberator" and "Savior."

Dionysus was considered the "Only Begotten Son," "King of Kings," "God of Gods," "Sin Bearer," "Redeemer," "Anointed One" and the "Alpha and Omega."

He was identified with the Ram or Lamb.

His sacrificial title of "Dendrites" or "Young Man of the Tree" indicates he was hung on a tree or crucified.

"Early Christian art is rich with Dionysiac associations, whether in boisterous representations of agape feasting, in the miracle of water-into-wine at Cana, in wine and vine motifs alluding to the Eucharist, and most markedly...in the use of Dionysiac facial traits for representations of Christ."

—Dr. Thomas F. Mathews, *The Clash of the Gods*, 45
Dionysus as the Sun

In studying religion and mythology, it is wise to keep in mind that in the ancient world many gods were confounded and compounded, deliberately or otherwise. Some were even considered interchangeable, such as the Egyptian gods Osiris, Horus and Ra. In this regard, ancient Greek historian Plutarch (35, 364E) states, "Osiris is identical with Dionysus," the Greek son of God. Dionysus, also known as Bacchus or Iacchus, is likewise identified with the god Aion and referred to as "Zeus Sabazius" in other traditions. (Graves, R., 335) Hence, we would expect him to share at least some of all these gods' attributes, including being born of a virgin at the winter solstice (Aion), and dying and rising from the dead (Osiris).

"Bacchus, Apollo, the Sun, are one deity."

Moreover, in *Seven Books Against the Heathen* (3.33), early Christian writer Arnobius (284-305) remarks that the Pagans "maintain that Bacchus, Apollo, the Sun, are one deity" and "the sun is also Bacchus and Apollo." (Roberts, VI, 472-3) We would expect, therefore, Dionysus's attributes to reflect solar mythology as well.

Dionysus riding a quadriga chariot

Dionysus returns from India riding a quadriga chariot
Mosaic pavement, 3rd cent. ad/ce
Sousse, Tunisia

(Patrick Hunt)

Apollo riding in his sun chariot
December 25th/Winter Solstice

As with Jesus, December 25th and January 6th are both traditional birth dates in the Dionysian myth and simply represent the period of the winter solstice. Indeed, the winter-solstice date of the Greek sun and wine god Dionysus was originally recognized in early January but was eventually placed on December 25th, as related by ancient Latin writer Macrobius (c. 400 AD/CE). Regardless, the effect is the same: The winter sun god is born around this time, when the shortest day of the year begins to become longer.

"Macrobius transfers this feast to the day of the winter solstice, December 25."

The ancient Church father Epiphanius (4th cent.) discussed the birth of the god Aion, son of the Greek goddess Persephone or Kore ("Maiden"), at the time of the winter solstice. In this regard, Christian theologian Rev. Dr. Hugh Rahner (139-140) remarks:

We know that Aion was at this time beginning to be regarded as identical with Helios and Helios with Dionysus...because [according to Macrobius] Dionysus was the symbol of the sun... He is made to appear small at the time of the winter solstice, when upon a certain day the Egyptians take him out of the crypt, because on this the shortest day of the year it is as though he were a little child.... Macrobius transfers [this feast] to the day of the winter solstice, December 25.

Dionysus is thus equivalent to Aion and was also said to have been born of Persephone, the virgin maiden. Esteemed mythologist Joseph Campbell (MI, 34) confirms this "celebration of the birth of the year-god Aion to the virgin Goddess Kore," the latter of whom he calls "a Hellenized transformation of Isis," the Egyptian mother goddess who was likewise called the "Great Virgin" in inscriptions predating the Christian era by centuries.[1]

Virgin Birth

According to the most common tradition, Dionysus was the son of the god Zeus and the mortal woman Semele. In the Cretan version of the same story, which the pre-Christian Greek historian Diodorus Siculus follows, Dionysus was the son of Zeus and Persephone, the daughter of Demeter also called Kore, who is styled a "virgin goddess."

In the common myth about the birth of Dionysus/Bacchus, Semele is mysteriously impregnated by one of Zeus's bolts of lightning--an obvious miraculous/virgin conception.

Semele, Zeus and the divine child Bacchus Semele immolated by the sky-god father-figure Zeus, who takes the divine child Bacchus (Bernard Salomon, *Metamorphose figurée*, 1557)

Concerning Dionysus's epithet "twice begotten," in the third century Church father Minucius Felix (Commodius, XII) remarked to his Pagan audience:

Ye yourselves say that Father Liber was assuredly twice begotten. First of all he was born in India of Proserpine [Persephone] and Jupiter [Zeus]... Again, restored from his death, in another womb Semele conceived him again of Jupiter... (Roberts, IV, 205)

"The virgin conceived the ever-dying, ever-living god of bread and wine, Dionysus."

In another account, Jupiter/Zeus gives Dionysus's torn-up heart in a drink to Semele, who becomes pregnant with the "twice born" god this way, again a miraculous or "virgin" birth. Indeed, Joseph Campbell explicitly calls Semele a "virgin":

While the maiden goddess sat there, peacefully weaving a mantle on which there was to be a representation of the universe, her mother contrived that Zeus should learn of her presence; he approached her in the form of an immense snake. And the virgin conceived the ever-dying, ever-living god of bread and wine, Dionysus, who was born and nurtured in that cave, torn to death as a babe and resurrected... (Campbell, MG, 4.27)

This same direct appellation is used by Cambridge professor and anthropologist Sir Dr. Edmund Ronald Leach:

Dionysus, son of Zeus, is born of a mortal virgin, Semele, who later became immortalized through the inter-vention of her divine son; Jesus, son of God, is born of a mortal virgin, Mary... such stories can be dupli-cated over and over again. (Hugh-Jones, 108)

Using the scholarly Greek term parthenos, meaning "virgin," in *The Cult of the Divine Birth in Ancient Greece* (95) Dr. Marguerite Rigoglioso concludes: "Semele was also likely a holy parthenos by virtue of the fact that she gave birth to Dionysus via her union with Zeus (Hesiod, *Theogony* 940)."

These learned individuals had reason to consider Dionysus's mother a virgin, as, again, he was also said to have been born of Persephone/Kore, whom, once more from Epiphanius, was herself deemed a "virgin," or parthenos. In this regard, professor emeritus of Classics at the University of Pennsylvania Dr. Donald White (183) says, "As a title 'Parthenos' was appropriate to both Demeter and Persephone..."

Persephone and Hades; Attic red-figured kylix, c. 440-430 BC.; Vulci, Italy (Photo: Marie-Lan Nguyen) The fact that Persephone is associated with parthenogenesis, the scholarly term for "virgin birth," lends credence to the notion that Dionysus was virgin-born. As related further by Rigoglioso in *Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity* (111):

Persephone's connection with the parthenogenetic pomegranate is attested in text and

iconography. In speaking directly about the Eleusinian Mysteries, Clement of Alexandria (Exhortation to the Greeks 2:16) informs us that the pomegranate tree was believed to have sprung from the drops of the blood of Dionysus...

Although Dionysus is depicted as being the product of a "rape" by Zeus, the story is little different from the impregnation of the Virgin Mary by Yahweh without her consent, especially in consideration of the identification of Dionysus's very blood with parthenogenesis. In this regard, Rigoglioso also states, "I contend that Persephone's eating of the pomegranate was the magical action that instigated her ability to conceive parthenogenetically."

Also, in the museum in Naples has been kept an ancient marble urn showing the birth/nativity of Dionysus, with two groups of three figures on either side of the god Mercury, who is holding the divine baby, and a female figure who is receiving him.[2]

This depiction resembles the gospel story of "wise men" or dignitaries, traditionally held to number three, approaching Joseph, the divine child and Mary.

Miracles

Dionysus holding a drinking cup, surrounded by grapes and vines. (Red-figure amphora by the Berlin Painter, c. 490-480 BCE; Vulci, Italy; Louvre, Paris)The miracles of Dionysus are legendary, as is his role as the god of wine, echoed in the later Christian story of Jesus multiplying the jars of wine at the wedding feast of Cana (Jn 2:1-9). Concerning this miracle, biblical scholar Dr. A.J. Mattill remarks:

This story is really the Christian counterpart to the pagan legends of Dionysus, the Greek god of wine, who at his annual festival in his temple of Elis filled three empty kettles with wine-no water needed! And on the fifth of January wine instead of water gushed from his temple at Andros. If we believe Jesus' miracle, why should we not believe Dionysus's? (Leedom, 125)

Dionysus's miracle of changing water to wine is recounted in pre-Christian times by Diodorus (Library of History, 3.66.3). As the god of the vine, Dionysus is depicted in ancient texts as traveling around teaching agriculture, as well as doing various other miracles, such as in Homer's *The Iliad*, dating to the 9th century BCE, and in *The Bacchae* of Euripides, the famous Greek playwright who lived around 480 to 406 BCE.

"Dionysus's blood is the wine of the sacrifice."

It is further interesting that the Communion as practiced today within Catholicism also had a place within the cult of Dionysus, as Campbell points out:

Dionysus-Bacchus-Zagreus-or, in the older, Sumero-Babylonian myths, Dumuzi-absu, Tammuz-...whose blood, in this chalice to be drunk, is the pagan prototype of the wine of the sacrifice of the Mass, which is transubstantiated by the words of consecration into the blood of the Son of the Virgin. (Campbell, MG, 4.23)

Epithets

In an Orphic hymn, Phanes-Dionysus is styled by the Greek title Protogonos or "first-born" of Zeus, also translated at times as "only-begotten son," although the term Monogenes would be more appropriately rendered as the latter. He is also called "Soter" or "Savior" in various inscriptions, including a bronze coin from the Thracian city of Maroneia dating to circa 400-350 BCE.[3] Like Jesus in his aspect as the Father, Dionysus is called Pater, or "father" in Greek.

"Dionysus is 'first-born,' 'Savior' and 'Father.'"

The title "King of Kings" and other epithets may reflect Dionysus's kinship with Osiris: During the late 18th to early 19th dynasties (c. 1300 BCE), Osiris's epithets included, "the king of eternity, the lord of everlastingness, who traverseth millions of years in the duration of his life, the firstborn son of the womb of Nut, begotten of Seb, the prince of gods and men, the god of gods, the king of kings, the lord of lords, the prince of princes, the governor of the world whose existence is for everlasting." (Budge, liii)
Death/Resurrection

Dionysus's death and resurrection were famous in ancient times, so much so that Christian father Origen (c. 184-c. 254) felt the need to address them in his *Contra Celsus* (IV, XVI-XVII), comparing them unfavorably, of course, to those of Christ. By Origen's time, these Dionysian mysteries had already been celebrated for centuries. Dionysus/Bacchus's resurrection or revival after having been torn to pieces or otherwise killed earned him the epithet of "twice born."

'[S]cene in the underworld. Dionysos mounting a chariot is about to leave his mother, Semele, and ascend'
(Kerenyi, pl. 47)

Moreover, it was said that Dionysus/Bacchus "slept three nights with Proserpine [Persephone],"[4] evidently referring to the god's journey into the underworld to visit his mother. Like Jesus, the god is claimed also to have "ascended to heaven," such as by Church father Justin Martyr (*First Apology*, 21; Roberts I, 170). Note that Dionysus is depicted here as an adult, rising out of the underworld after death, with a horse-driven chariot so typical of a sun god. One major astrotheological meaning of this motif is the sun's entrance into and exit from the cave (womb) of the world at the winter solstice.

Hence, in Dionysus we have yet another solar hero, born of a virgin on "December 25th" or the winter solstice, performing miracles and receiving divine epithets, being killed, giving his blood as a sacrifice, resurrecting from the dead after three days in Hades/Hell, and ascending into heaven. These motifs have all been claimed of the gospel figure of Jesus Christ since antiquity and have to do not with the adventures of a "historical" Jewish savior but with the ubiquitous solar mythos and ritual.

[1] See Murdock, *Christ in Egypt*, 120-197.

[2] Carus, 49; Mangasarian, 74. For the illustration, Carus cites: "After Mus. Bord., I., 49, from Baumeister, Plate I., p. 448."

[3] Wright, 30. See also Adrados, 327.

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Attis: Born of a Virgin on December 25th, Crucified and Resurrected after Three Days
by D.M. Murdock/Acharya S

'A Roman wood and ivory throne found in the Villa of the Papyri, Herculaneum, showing Attis next to a sacred pine tree collecting a pine cone.' (Photo: Reuters/Archaeology Superintendent of Pompeii)

In many mythicist writings, the ancient Phrygo-Roman god Attis is depicted as having been born of a virgin mother on December 25th, being killed and resurrecting afterwards. Here we shall examine the evidence for these contentions, which parallel the gospel story and Christian tradition concerning Jesus Christ.

Attis was born on December 25th of the Virgin Nana.

He was a shepherd, as Christ was called the "Good Shepherd."

He was considered the "only begotten son," the Logos/Word and the savior slain for the salvation of mankind.

His cult had a sacrificial meal, at which, it is contended, his body as bread was eaten by his worshippers.

His priests were "eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 19:12).

Attis served as both the Divine Son and the Father.

On "Black Friday," he was "crucified" on a tree, from which his holy blood ran down to redeem the earth.

He descended into the underworld.

After three days, Attis was resurrected on March 25th (as tradition held of Jesus) as the "Most High God."

Providing a summary of the mythos and ritual of Attis, along with comparisons to Christian tradition, professor of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Manchester Dr. Andrew T. Fear states:

The youthful Attis after his murder was miraculously brought to life again three days after his demise. The celebration of this cycle of death and renewal was one of the major festivals of the metroac cult. Attis therefore represented a promise of reborn life and as such it is not surprising that we find representations of the so-called mourning Attis as a common tomb motif in the ancient world.

The parallel, albeit at a superficial level, between this myth and the account of the resurrection of Christ is clear. Moreover Attis as a shepherd occupies a favourite Christian image of Christ as the good shepherd. Further parallels also seem to have existed: the pine tree of Attis, for example, was seen as a parallel to the cross of Christ.

Beyond Attis himself, Cybele too offered a challenge to Christian divine nomenclature. Cybele was regarded as a virgin goddess and as such could be seen as a rival to the Virgin Mary... Cybele as the mother of the Gods, mater Deum, here again presented a starkly pagan parallel to the Christian Mother of God.

There was rivalry too in ritual. The climax of the celebration of Attis' resurrection, the Hilaria, fell on the 25th of March, the date that the early church had settled on as the day of Christ's death.... (Lane, 39-40)

As we can see, according to this scholar, Attis is killed, fixed to a tree, and resurrects after three days, while his mother is "regarded as a virgin goddess" comparable to the Virgin Mary.

These conclusions come from the writings of ancient Pagans, as well as the early Church fathers, including Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Tatian, Tertullian, Augustine, Arnobius and Firmicus Maternus.
Born of the Virgin Nana

The Phrygian god Attis's mother was variously called Cybele and Nana. Like the Egyptian goddess Isis and the Christian figure Mary, Nana/Cybele is a perpetual virgin, despite her status as a mother. The scholarly term used to describe virgin birth is "parthenogenesis," while many goddesses are referred to as "Parthenos," the Greek word meaning "virgin." This term is applicable to the Phrygian goddess Cybele/Nana as well.

"Attis is the son of Cybele in her form as the virgin, Nana."

Medallion of Cybele in chariot, under the sun, moon and star; 2nd cent. BCE, Ai Khanoum, Afghanistan (Singh, 94)

The diverse names of Attis's mother and her manner of impregnation are explained by Dr. David Adams Leeming (25), professor emeritus of English and comparative literature at the University of Connecticut:

Attis is the son of Cybele in her form as the virgin, Nana, who is impregnated by the divine force in the form of a pomegranate.

Regarding Nana, in *Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity* (111), Dr. Marguerite Rigoglioso states:

...Another instance of spontaneous conception occurred when Nana, whose very name was one by which the Great Goddess was known, became pregnant simply by eating the tree's fruit...

December 25th

The "December 25th" or winter-solstice birth of the sun god is a common theme in several cultures around the world over the past millennia, including the Egyptian, among others. As it is for the Perso-Roman god Mithra, the Egyptian god Horus and the Christian godman Jesus, this date has likewise been claimed for Attis's nativity as well. For example, Barbara G. Walker (77) writes:

Attis's passion was celebrated on the 25th of March, exactly nine months before the solstitial festival of his birth, the 25th of December. The time of his death was also the time of his conception, or re-conception.

"Each year, Attis was born at the winter solstice."

In this same regard, Shirley Toulson (34) remarks:

In the secret rites of this Great Mother the young god Attis figured as her acolyte and consort.... Each year he was born at the winter solstice, and each year as the days shortened, he died.

The reasoning behind this contention of the vegetative and solar god Attis's birth at the winter solstice is sound enough, in that it echoes natural cycles, with the god's death at the vernal equinox also representing the time when he is conceived again, to be born nine months later.

Moreover, at times the young Attis was merged with Mithra, whose birthday was traditionally held on December 25th and with whom he shared the same Phrygian capped attire.

Attis wearing a Phrygian cap

Marble bust of Attis wearing Phrygian cap

2nd cent. ad/ce
(Paris)

Mithra wearing a Phrygian cap

Mithra in a Phrygian cap
2nd cent. ad/ce
Rome, Italy
(British Museum, London)
Crucified

The myths of Attis's death include him being killed by a boar or by castrating himself under a tree, as well as being hung on a tree or "crucified." Indeed, he has been called the "castrated and crucified Attis." (Harari, 31) It should be noted that the use of the term "crucified" as concerns gods like Horus and Attis does not connote that he or they were thrown to the ground and nailed to a cross, as we commonly think of crucifixion, based on the Christian tale. In reality, there have been plenty of ancient figures who appeared in cruciform, some of whose myths specifically have them punished or killed through crucifixion, such as Prometheus.

"The god has been called the 'castrated and crucified Attis.'"

Moreover, Attis is said to have been "crucified" to a pine tree, while Christ too was related as being both crucified and hung on a tree (Acts 5:30 ; 10:39). As stated by La Trobe University professor Dr. David John Tacey (110):

Especially significant for us is the fact that the Phrygian Attis was crucified upon the tree...

In antiquity, these two concepts were obviously similar enough to be interchangeable in understanding.

Tomb/Three Days/Resurrected

We have already seen Dr. Fear's commentary that Attis was dead for three days and was resurrected, worth reiterating here:

"The youthful Attis after his murder was miraculously brought to life again three days after his demise."

Death of Attis The death and resurrection in three days, the "Passion of Attis," is also related by Professor Merlin Stone (146):

Roman reports of the rituals of Cybele record that the son...was first tied to a tree and then buried. Three days later a light was said to appear in the burial tomb, whereupon Attis rose from the dead, bringing salvation with him in his rebirth.

Concerning the discovery of a throne at Herculaneum, Italy, buried in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 AD/CE, archaeologist Dr. Mark Merrony remarks:

...Unusually, the throne is carved with scenes depicting the mystery cult of Attis, which spread to Rome from Turkey via Greece during the reign of Claudius (AD 41-54). Essentially, historical texts indicate that this cult was concerned with the life, death, and resurrection of the goddess, and involved several key stages enacted in March: the procession of the reed-bearers and flute-blowers; the entrance of the sacred pine tree; the burial of the effigy of Attis strapped to a stake; mourning, sacrifice, and bloodletting; and the resurrection of Attis. The best-preserved scene on the throne shows the deity collecting a pine cone next to a sacred pine tree.

There is a debate as to when the various elements were added to the Attis myth and ritual. Contrary to the current fad of dismissing all correspondences between Christianity and Paganism, the fact that Attis was at some point a "dying and rising god" is concluded by Dr. Tryggve Mettinger, a professor of Old Testament Studies at the University of Lund and author of *The Riddle of the Resurrection*, who relates: "Since the time of Damascius (6th cent. ad/ce), Attis seems to have been believed to die and return." (Mettinger, 159) By that point, we possess clear discussion in writing of Attis having been resurrected, but when exactly were these rites first celebrated and where? Attis worship is centuries older than Jesus worship and was popular in some parts of the Roman Empire before and well into the "Christian era."

In the case of Attis, we possess a significant account of his death and mourning in the writings of the Greek historian of the first century BCE, Diodorus Siculus (3.58.7), including the evidently annual ritual creation of his image by priests, indicative of his resurrection. Hence, these noteworthy aspects of the Attis myth are clearly pre-Christian. The reason these motifs are common in many places is because they revolve around nature worship, solar mythology and astrotheology.

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Was Krishna Born of a Virgin?
by Acharya S/D.M. Murdock

The following article is excerpted from:

Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled

suns of god cover image

"The goddesses have stories to tell. One such story—far too long ignored—is that, in their original, unadulterated form, they were parthenogenetic. The word parthenogenesis comes from the Greek parthenos, 'virgin' more or less, and gignesthai, 'to be born.' It means, essentially, to be born of a virgin—that is, without the participation of a male. For a goddess to be 'parthenogenetic' thus means that she stands as a primordial creatrix, who requires no male partner to produce the cosmos, earth, life, matter and even other gods out of her own essence. Plentiful evidence shows that in their earliest cults, before they were subsumed under patriarchal pantheons as the wives, sisters and daughters of male gods, various female deities of the ancient Mediterranean world were indeed considered self-generating, virgin creatrices."

Dr. Marguerite Rigoglioso, Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity (1)

"Let our Christian readers bear in mind that the worship of the virgin and her child was common in the East, ages before the generally received account of Christ's appearance in the flesh."

Existence of Christ Disproved

"Crishna was born of a chaste virgin, called Devaki, who, on account of her purity, was selected to become the 'mother of God.'"

Doane, Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions

A recurring theme in ancient religion revolves around the manner of the sun god's birth, as well as the chastity of his mother. In a number of instances the sun god is perceived as being born of the inviolable dawn, the virgin moon or earth, or the constellation of Virgo. The virgin status of the mothers of pre-Christian gods and godmen has been asserted for centuries by numerous scholars of mythology and ancient religion. Nevertheless, because of the motif's similarity to a major Christian tenet, apologists attempt to debunk it by simply stating that these Pagan mothers were not virgins, for a variety of reasons, including their marital status, number of children and the manner of impregnation. Regardless, the virgin status of the ancient goddesses or mothers of gods remains, despite their manner of impregnation, because the fathers, like that of Jesus, are gods themselves, as opposed to mortals who physically penetrate the mothers. Also, the mothers are not "real people," but goddesses themselves, who therefore do not possess female genitalia. The Triple GoddessThus, despite being a mother, the goddess retains her virginity. In fact, the Virgin is one face of the Triple Goddess of ancient times, comprising the Maiden, Mother and Crone. Concerning the Triple Goddess, McLean says:

The more general archetype was often seen in mythology as threefold; thus, for example, Aphrodite was seen as Aphrodite the Virgin, Aphrodite the Wife, and Aphrodite the Whore. A similar triplicity is found in the figure of Isis as Sister, Wife and Widow of Osiris.

Regarding the Great Mother Goddess, whether called by the name Sophia, Ishtar or Isis, whose cult extended all over the Mediterranean and beyond, Legge says:

Her most prominent characteristics show her to be a personification of the Earth, the mother of all living, ever bringing forth and ever a virgin

In The Once and Future Goddess, Gadon remarks:

Many goddess were called virgin but this did not mean that chastity was considered a virtue in the pagan world. Some, like "Venus, Ishtar, Astarte, and Anath, the love goddesses of the Near East and classical mythology, are entitled virgin despite their lovers, who die and rise again for them each year."

Concerning the Goddess, Rev. James relates:

Among the Sumerian and Babylonians she had been known as Inanna-Ishtar, while in Syria and Palestine she appeared as Asherah, Astarte and Anat, corresponding to Hera, Aphrodite and Artemis of the Greeks, representing the three main aspects of womanhood as wife and mother, as lover and mistress, and as a chaste and beautiful virgin full of youthful charm and vigour, often confused one with the other.

As one example of this confusion, in spite of this mythological theme of the triple goddess and her perpetual virginity, the virgin status of the Egyptian Madonna Isis is challenged because, according to one popular legend, she fecundated herself using

Osiris's severed phallus. However, in another tradition Isis was miraculously impregnated "by a flash of lightning or by the rays of the moon." In *The Golden Bough*, Frazer tells another version in which Isis conceived Horus "while she fluttered in the form of a hawk over the corpse of her dead husband." In this story, Horus is born before Osiris is rent into pieces; hence, Isis does not use the dead god's phallus to impregnate herself. Frazer also says:

The ritual of the nativity, as it appears to have been celebrated in Syria and Egypt, was remarkable. The celebrants retired into certain inner shrines, from which at midnight they issued with a loud cry, "The Virgin has brought forth! The light is waxing!" The Egyptians even represented the new-born sun by the image of an infant which on his birthday, the winter solstice, they brought forth and exhibited to his worshippers. No doubt the Virgin who thus conceived and bore a son on the twenty-fifth of December was the great Oriental goddess whom the Semites called the Heavenly Virgin or simply the Heavenly Goddess

Isis nursing Horus on Throne, Bronze Statue, Egyptian Late Period, 7th-6th cents. BCE Thus, as is proper for goddesses, Isis retained her virginity, maintaining her epithets of "Immaculate Virgin" and the "uncontaminated goddess" regardless of her status also as "Mother of God" and "Magna Mater" or Great Mother. The same motif exists within Christianity, in which the Virgin Mother is essentially impregnated by the "holy ghost" but nonetheless remains a virgin. Isis is, in reality, the virgin or new moon, receiving or being impregnated by the light of the sun. In the mythos, the moon gives birth monthly and annually to the sun; hence, she is mother of many yet remains a virgin. Confirming Isis's rank as perpetual virgin, in *The Story of Religious Controversy*, Joseph McCabe, a Catholic priest for many years, writes:

Virginity in goddesses is a relative matter.

Whatever we make of the original myth Isis seems to have been originally a virgin (or, perhaps, sexless) goddess, and in the later period of Egyptian religion she was again considered a virgin goddess, demanding very strict abstinence from her devotees. It is at this period, apparently, that the birthday of Horus was annually celebrated, about December 25th, in the temples. As both Macrobius and the Christian writer [of the "Paschal Chronicle"] say, a figure of Horus as a baby was laid in a manger, in a scenic reconstruction of a stable, and a statue of Isis was placed beside it. Horus was, in a sense, the Savior of mankind. He was their avenger against the powers of darkness; he was the light of the world. His birth-festival was a real Christmas before Christ.

The *Chronicon Paschale*, or Paschal Chronicle, is a compilation finalized in the 7th century ce that seeks to establish a Christian chronology from "creation" to the year 628 ce, focusing on the date of Easter. In establishing Easter, the Christian authors naturally discussed astronomy/astrology, since such is the basis of the celebration of Easter, a pre-Christian festival founded upon the vernal equinox, or spring, when the "sun of God" is resurrected in full from his winter death. The vernal equinox during the current Ages of Pisces has fallen in March, specifically beginning on March 21st, lasting three days, when the sun overcomes the darkness, and the days begin to become longer than the

night. In the solar mythos, the sun god starts his growth towards "manhood," when he is the strongest, at the summer solstice. Hence, Easter is the resurrection of the sun. As does Macrobius, the Paschal Chronicle relates that the sun (Horus) was presented every year at winter solstice (c. 12/25), as a babe born in a manger.

Ptah, Sokar, Osiris approach the baby Sokar in his ark or manger, brought out at the winter solstice, c. 3rd cent. BCE

Concerning the Paschal Chronicle, Dupuis relates:

"the author of the Chronicle of Alexandria expresses himself in the following words: 'The Egyptians have consecrated up to this day the child-birth of a virgin and the nativity of her son, who is exposed in a "crib" to the adoration of the people'"

Another important source who cites the Paschal Chronicle and mentions Isis's virginity is James Bonwick in Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought:

In an ancient Christian work, called the "Chronicle of Alexandria," occurs the following: "Watch how Egypt has consecrated the childbirth of a virgin, and the birth of her son, who was exposed in a crib to the adoration of her people"

CMU cites the "most ancient chronicles of Alexandria, which "testify as follows":

"To this day, Egypt has consecrated the pregnancy of a virgin, and the nativity of her son, whom they annually present in a cradle, to the adoration of the people; and when king Ptolemy, three hundred and fifty years before our Christian era, demanded of the priests the significance of this religious ceremony, they told him it was a mystery."

CMU further states, "According to Eratosthenes [276-194 bce], the celestial Virgin was supposed to be Isis, that is, the symbol of the returning year."

Interestingly, all sources cited herein relate a different translation of the Chronicle, which would indicate that they used the original Latin text and that it contained the word "virgin."

Regarding Isis's baby, Count Volney remarks:

It is the sun which, under the name of Horus, was born, like your [Christian] God, at the winter solstice, in the arms of the celestial virgin, and who passed a childhood of obscurity, indigence, and want, answering to the season of cold and frost.

The virginity of Isis was quite clearly a tenet held by her devotees. By Budge's assessment, Isis is also "the deity of the dawn," which, as we will see, would make her "inviolable" and "eternal," i.e., a perpetual virgin.

Isis suckling Horus, Mary suckling Jesus
The worship of the Virgin Isis was eventually turned into that of the Virgin Mary. As Legge says:

The worship of the Virgin as the Theotokos or Mother of God which was introduced into the Catholic Church about the time of the destruction of the Serapeum, enabled the devotees of Isis to continue unchecked their worship of the mother goddess by merely changing the name of the object of their adoration, and Prof. Drexler gives a long list of the statues of Isis which thereafter were used, sometimes with unaltered attributes, as those of the Virgin Mary.

Concerning this usurpation, which simply constituted the changing of the goddess from one ethnicity to another, apologist Sir Weigall remarks:

while the story of the death and resurrection of Osiris may have influenced the thought of the earliest Christians in regard to the death and resurrection of our Lord, there can be no doubt that the myths of Isis had a direct bearing upon the elevation of Mary, the mother of Jesus, to her celestial position in the Roman Catholic theology. In her aspect as the mother of Horus, Isis was represented in tens of thousands of statuettes and paintings, holding the divine child in her arms; and when Christianity triumphed these paintings and figures became those of the Madonna and Child without any break in continuity: no archaeologist, in fact, can now tell whether some of these objects represent the one or the other.

As noted, the tri-fold nature of the Goddess in general reflects, or is reflected in, the moon. In Greek mythology, the "triple moon" is represented by Selene; other goddesses also are lunar, such as Artemis, who was the "virgin" moon, and Hera, Zeus's wife and mother of several Hera suckling Herakles/Hercules, who drinks of the milk of eternal lifechildren. Hera, however, despite being portrayed as having relations with Zeus, remains a virgin, or, rather, becomes a "born-again virgin," by virtue of ritualistic bathing. As McLean says:

Hera's three facets link her to the three Seasons and the three phases of the Moon. In her earliest appearance in myth she is associated with the cow, showing her connection with fecundity and birth, especially associated by the Greeks with this animal. She renewed her virginity each year by bathing in the stream Canathos near Argos, a place especially sacred to her.

Like Hera, Artemis too renews her virginity annually by bathing nude in a "sacred fountain." Even a promiscuous male god such as Zeus was both "Father" and "Eternal Virgin."

In reality, the virgin-mother motif is common enough in pre-Christian cultures to demonstrate its unoriginality in Christianity. In Pagan and Christian Creeds, Carpenter recites a long list of virgin mothers:

Zeus, Father of the gods, visited Semele in the form of a thunderstorm; and she gave birth to the great saviour and deliverer Dionysus. Zeus, again, impregnated Danae in a shower of gold; and the child was Perseus Devaki, the radiant Virgin of the Hindu mythology, became the wife of the god Vishnu and bore Krishna, the beloved hero and

prototype of Christ. With regard to Buddha, St. Jerome says "It is handed down among the Gymnosophists of India that Buddha, the founder of their system, was brought forth by a Virgin from her side." The Egyptian Isis, with the child Horus on her knee, was honored centuries before the Christian era, and worshipped under the names of "Our Lady," "Queen of Heaven," "Star of the Sea," "Mother of God," and so forth. Before her, Neith, the Virgin of the World, whose figure bends from the sky over the earthly plains and the children of men, was acclaimed as mother of the great god Osiris. The saviour Mithra, too, was born of a Virgin, as we have had occasion to notice before; and on Mithraist monuments the mother suckling her child is not an uncommon figure.

The old Teutonic goddess Hertha (the Earth) was a Virgin, but was impregnated by the heavenly Spirit (the Sky); and her image with a child in her arms was to be seen in the sacred groves of Germany. The Scandinavian Frigga, in much the same way, being caught in the embraces of Odin, the All-father, conceived and bore a son, the blessed Balder, healer and saviour of mankind. Quetzalcoatl, the (crucified) saviour of the Aztecs, was the son of Chimalman, the Virgin Queen of Heaven. Even the Chinese had a mother-goddess and virgin with child in her arms; and the ancient Etruscans the same

Black Madonna and Child from the Cathedral of Santa Eulalia, Barcelona, Spain
Carpenter also mentions the black virgin mothers found all over the Mediterranean and especially in Italian churches, representing not only Isis but also Mary, having been refigured or "baptized anew" as the "Jewish" Mother of God.

As stated, the theme of the virgin-born god can be found in the Americas as well, including in the story of Quetzalcoatl, but also in Brazil, among the Manicacas. It can likewise be found in India, where natives have revered for eons "Devi" or "Maha-Devi," "The One Great Goddess," in whose name temples have been built. Doane relates that a researcher named Gonzales found an Indian temple dedicated to the "Pariturae Virginisthe Virgin about to bring forth."

This "Devi" is apparently the same as Krishna's mother, Devaki, and, as was the case with these many ancient gods, Krishna has also been considered to have been "born of a virgin." Indeed, Carpenter repeats the assertion, also made by Rev. Cox, that Krishna's father was Vishnu, not the mortal Basudev, a sensible notion in light of Krishna's status as a sun god and incarnation of Vishnu. Regarding Krishna, Doane also states:

According to the religion of the Hindoos, Crishnawas the Son of God, and the Holy Virgin Devaki

The ex-priest McCabe also reports Krishna's mother as a virgin, with Vishnu as his father:

Devaki Nursing Krishna
Thus one of the familiar religious emblems of India was the statue of the virgin mother (as the Hindus repute her) Devaki and her divine son Krishna, an incarnation of the great god Vishnu. Christian writers have held that this model was borrowed from Christianity, butthe Hindus had far earlier been in

communication with Egypt and were more likely to borrow the model of Isis and Horus. One does not see why they should borrow any model. In nearly all religions with a divine mother and son a very popular image was that of the divine infant at his mother's breast or in her arms.

None of these writers originated this contention, as, moving back in time, we find reference to Devaki's virgin status in the writings of the esteemed Christian authority Sir William Jones from 1784:

"The Indian incarnate God Chrishna, the Hindoos believe, had a virgin mother of the royal race, who was sought to be destroyed in his infancy about nine hundred years before Christ. It appears that he passed his life in working miracles, and preaching, and was so humble as to wash his friends' feet; at length, dying, but rising from the dead, he ascended into heaven in the presence of a multitude."...

The Virgin Goddess

The virgin goddess motif is prevalent in the ancient world because it is astrotheological, representing not only the moon but also the earth, Venus, Virgo and the dawn. As the Roman poet Virgil described or "prophesied" in his Eclogues in 37 bce, the "return of the virgin," i.e., Virgo would, along with other astrotheological events, bring about "a new breed of men sent down from heaven," as well as the birth of a boy "in whom the golden race [shall] arise."

The virgin-born "golden boy" is the sun. As Hackwood states:

Virgin Mary in front of the sun, standing on the moon, from a Medieval illuminated Latin manuscript
The Virgin Mary is called not only the Mother of God, but the Queen of Heaven. This connects her directly with astronomic lore. The ornamentation of many continental churches often includes a representation of the Sun and Moon "in conjunction," the Moon being therein emblematical of the Virgin and Child.

As the Moon is the symbol of Mary, Queen of Heaven, so also a bright Star sometimes symbolizes him whose star was seen over Jerusalem by the Wise Men from the East.

Regarding the astrotheological nature of the gospel story, including the virgin birth/immaculate conception, the famous Christian theologian and saint Albertus Magnus, or Albert the Great, (1193?-1280) admitted:

"We know that the sign of the celestial Virgin did come to the horizon at the moment where we have fixed the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. All the mysteries of the incarnation of our Saviour Christ; and all the circumstances of his marvellous life, from his conception to his ascension, are to be traced out in the constellations, and are figured in the stars."

...As Albert the Great acknowledged, the virgin-birth motif is astrotheological, referring

to the hour of midnight, December 25th, when the constellation of Virgo rises on the horizon. The Assumption of the Virgin, celebrated in Catholicism on August 15th, represents the summer sun's brightness blotting out Virgo. Mary's Nativity, celebrated on September 8th, occurs when the constellation is visible again. Such is what these "Christian" motifs and holidays represent, as has obviously been known by the more erudite of the Catholic clergy. Hence, the virgin who will conceive and bring forth is Virgo, and her son is the sun....

Hellenistic Mother and Child, Boeotia 450-440 BCE. London, British Museum. Photo: Ann Raia, 2006. In vain do apologists attempt to debunk the virgin status of Krishna's mother, because, even if she were not considered as such although she certainly was the other virgin birth stories preceding Christianity are abundant enough to demonstrate that this important aspect of Christian doctrine is of Pagan origin. In addition to the virgin-born deities and heroes already named were a number of others, which is to be expected since we know the astrotheological meaning behind the motif, as it applies to the sun god, who was worshipped all over the world by a wide variety of names and epithets. Concerning these miraculous births, Dr. Inman comments:

Jupiter had Bacchus and Minerva without Juno's aid, and Juno retaliated by bearing Ares without conversation with her consort. We deride these tales, and yet think, that because we laugh at a hundred such we will be pardoned for believing one.

Again, the Christian virgin birth is no more historical or believable than that of these numerous other gods. Moreover, as Robertson says, "The idea of a Virgin-Mother-Goddess is practically universal." The list of Pagan virgin mothers includes the following:

Ancient Babylonian Mother and Child
Imene, mother of Hercules who gave birth on December 25th

Alitta, Babylonian Madonna and Child

Anat, Syrian wife of "the earlier Supreme God El," called "Virgin Goddess"

Cavillaca, Peruvian huaca (divine spirit) impregnated by the "son of the sun god" through eating his semen in the shape of a fruit

Chimalman, mother of Kukulcan

Chinese mother of Foe (Buddha)

Coatlicue, mother of the Mexican god Huitzilopochtli

Cybele, "Queen of Heaven and Mother of God"

Danae, mother of Perseus

Demeter/Ceres, "Holy Virgin" mother of Persephone/Kore and Dionysus

Devaki, mother of Krishna

Frigga, mother of the Scandinavian god Balder

Hera, mother of Zeus's children

Hertha, Teutonic goddess

Isis, who gave birth to Horus on December 25th

Juno, mother of Mars/Ares, called "Matrona" and "Virginalis," the Mother and Virgin

Mandana, mother of Cyrus/Koresh

Maya, mother of Buddha

Mother of Lao-kiun, "Chinese philosopher and teacher, born in 604 B.C."
Mother of the Indian solar god Rudra
Nana, mother of Attis
Neith, mother of Osiris, who was "worshipped as the Holy Virgin, the Great Mother, yet an Immaculate Virgin."
Nutria, mother of an Etruscan Son of God
Ostara, the German goddess
Rohini, mother of Indian "son of God"
Semele, mother of Dionysus/Bacchus, who was born on December 25th
Shin-Moo, Chinese Holy Mother
Siamese mother of Somonocodom (Buddha)
Sochiquetzal, mother of Quetzalcoatl
Vari, Polynesian "First Mother," who created her children "by plucking pieces out of her sides."
Venus, the "Virgo Coelestis" depicted as carrying a child

Obviously, the correspondences between Christianity and Paganism, including between the Christ and Krishna myths, are dramatic and not "non-existent," as some have attempted to contend. The debate then becomes whether or not the Christ fable was plagiarized from the Krishna myth, vice versa, or both come from a common root. In this regard, it should be kept in mind that there was plenty of commerce, materially and religiously, between India and Rome during the first centuries surrounding the beginning of the Christian era.

Since it is possible to show that most of the salient comparisons can be found in pre-Christian Pagan mythology, dating back millennia and existing independent of the Krishna story, the point becomes moot as to whether or not Christianity took its godman and tenets from Hinduism, as it already had many other antecedents to draw from. In reality, the virgin-birth motif is primitive and prehistoric, relating back to ages and cultures in which impregnation was considered mysterious and magical.

For more information, including citations, see *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled*.

Also by Acharya S:

Was Krishna's Mother a Virgin?
The ZEITGEIST Sourcebook
Further Reading

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Neith, Virgin Mother of the World

Neith-Isis, Virgin Mother Goddess of Egypt, with shuttle on her head; 'A Handbook for

Travellers in Lower and Upper Egypt.' London: John Murray, 1888; p. 082a

The worship of the Egyptian goddess Neith, a sometime mother of the solar deity Horus, is traceable to around 7,000 years ago, according to Dr. Wim van Binsbergen, chairman of the Foundations of Intercultural Philosophy at Erasmus University, who calls her an example of "female parthenogenetic cosmogenesis." (van Binsbergen, 35)

"Neith never engaged in any kind of sexual union; that is, she was eternally a virgin. Yet, as the primordial Being, she was also generative. Thus, in Neith we have one of the earliest appearances of the archetype of the Virgin Mother, the Holy Parthenos, in her original, unadulterated form."

Regarding the very ancient Neith and her parthenogenetic capacity, in her book *Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity* Dr. Marguerite Rigoglioso remarks:

...Neith was unequivocally portrayed as an autogenetic/ parthenogenetic creatrix in the inscriptions of the middle and late periods in Egypt, a depiction that may have characterized the goddess in her earliest cult as well. She specifically was both creator and "virgin," a being whose peplos, or dress, no one had lifted. As one of the oldest deities of Egypt, who most likely was worshipped throughout ancient Libya, she thus represents one of the earliest appearances of the archetype of the Virgin Mother goddess in the ancient Mediterranean world. (23)

It is important in discussing Neith as autogene, or self-created Virgin Mother...first to establish her preeminence in the Egyptian pantheon. Neith...was one of the oldest of all Egyptian deities and one of the most important divinities during the early historic period. There is strong evidence that her worship was widespread in predynastic times... She is first documented iconographically in the last phase of the predynastic period (c. fourth millennium B.C.E.)... (26)

As a divinity of the First Principle, Neith was an autogenetic goddess who, in the ultimate mystery, created herself out of her own being. Budge notes...that an inscription on a statue of Utchat-Heru, a high priest of Neith, relates that she "was the first to give birth to anything, and that she had done so when nothing else had been born, and that she had herself never been born." We see her autogenetic aspect echoed in both Egyptian and Greek texts. Plutarch...refers to an inscription on her statue in Sais...: "I am everything that has been, and that is, and that shall be, and no one has ever lifted my garment (peplos)."... That in the above-noted Saitic inscription Neith's "garment" remained perpetually "unlifted" is also a sexual reference... The inscription therefore communicates that Neith never engaged in any kind of sexual union; that is, she was eternally a virgin. Yet, as the primordial Being, she was also generative. Thus, in Neith we have one of the earliest appearances of the archetype of the Virgin Mother, the Holy Parthenos, in her original, unadulterated form. (29-30)

Respected Egyptologist Dr. Claus Bleeker concurs with this assessment regarding Neith, remarking in *The Rainbow: A Collection of Studies in the Science of Religion* (139-140):

It appears that the connection between Neith and the primeval cow has several implications. Neith is not only a primeval deity but also a goddess of the universe. An echo of the conviction that she exercises the latter function can be heard in the inscription on her statue in Sais, as it is quoted by Plutarch: ["The present and the future and the past, I am. My undergarment no one has uncovered. The fruit I brought forth, the sun came into being."] Her quality as primeval deity is indicated in the explanation of her name which Plutarch offers, i.e.... "I came (into existence) out of myself."... It is confirmed by a line in the myth of creation at Esna, which reads: "apparue d'elle-même" ["appeared from herself"].

The idea that Neith is a goddess who produces life out of herself is also expressed in the notion that she is androgynous.... She has no partner beside her. In Esna she is accompanied by two sons. She is the virgin goddess who procreates children without male assistance.

It is therefore not surprising that she is considered as a creator. (Emph. added)

It should be recalled that Neith is identified in antiquity with both the Greek goddess Athena, who is likewise a parthenogenetic creatrix or virgin mother, as well as Isis, about whom the same can be and is said. Among others, Isis is identified with the constellation of Virgo, the Virgin, likewise in antiquity. There are many such manifestations of the virgin mother, long before Christianity was ever conceived.

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Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity
by Marguerite Rigoglioso, PhD
Reviewed by D.M. Murdock/Acharya S

[Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity by Dr. Marguerite Rigoglioso cover image & link](#)

"The lack of commentary on the tremendous female power embedded in some of

our oldest religious stories has rendered virgin motherhood essentially invisible from the start...

...a Virgin Mother [is one] who produced life from within herself without a male consort."

Dr. Marguerite Rigoglioso, *Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity* (15, 51)

Whatever one takes away from *Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity* by Dr. Marguerite Rigoglioso, the book certainly is a tour de force. Phrases like "parthenogenetic creator deity" and "virgin creatrix" readily convey the concept of a virgin mother from remotest times, like a splash of cold water waking up our long dormant female spiritual traditions. There can be no doubt that the virgin-mother concept did not originate with Christianity and that, in my opinion, the idea of the Virgin Mary as a historical personage appears unsupportable from this and much more evidence.

Suddenly, it all makes sense: Of course, the Great Creator of the Universe has been viewed as a female--a goddess--during a significant period of human culture. Evidence in many places points to this idea of a self-generative--essentially virginal--female creator preceding the development of a male counterpart. For, if God the Father or Yahweh is the creator, yet he has no consort, according to Christian tradition, and is basically asexual, then he too is virginal. Like Isis and so many others, God the Father is the Great Virgin. Nevertheless, like them he too begets. He is the Virgin Father--a concept applied to the Greek god Zeus as well, despite how many times he is said to procreate, since he is called in antiquity "parthenos" or virgin. As mythologist Robert Graves says, "Thus the Orphic hymn celebrates Zeus as both Father and Eternal Virgin." (Graves, 361) Rigoglioso also discusses Zeus as virgin creator, as in Orphic fragment 167:

Zeus's parthenogenetic capacity is expressed here in the idea that all existence was "created anew" in the moment of his ingesting of the older god [Phanes].
(Rigoglioso 2010, 46)

Cult of the Divine Birth by Marguerite Rigoglioso
The role of Greek influence in much important religious thought is also highlighted in Dr. Rigoglioso's earlier work, *The Cult of the Divine Births in Ancient Greece*, which she frequently cites in her quest to show the omnipresent divine Virgin Mother Goddess in pre-Christian religion and mythology, dating back several thousand years. In any event, the various concepts predate their origin in Greece and can be found in numerous other places in antiquity, such as Asia Minor and Egypt.

As Rigoglioso thoroughly demonstrates in *Virgin Mother Goddesses*, ancient parthenogenetic female creators include:

Chaos, Nyx and Ge/Gaia
Athena/Neith/Metis
Artemis

Hera
Demeter and Persephone/Kore
Gnostic Sophia (essay by Angeleen Campa)

Space does not permit me to recount all the remarkable evidence and insights Rigoglioso provides; suffice it to say that my copy of *Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity* is full of plastic sticky tabs marking what seems to be every other paragraph. Neith the Egyptian Prime Mover

While reading about the Egyptian virgin-mother goddess Neith, I was struck once more with how spiritually and religiously sophisticated were the Egyptians. Their high culture as revealed in their social structure and architecture is also expressed in their religion, mythology and spirituality. In many ways, in the Egyptian culture we are looking at an advanced level of civilization seldom reached since then.

Regarding Neith, Rigoglioso relates:

As a divinity of the First Principle, Neith was an autogenetic [self-begetting] goddess who, in the ultimate mystery, created herself out of her own being. ...an inscription on a statue of Utchat-Heru, a high priest of Neith, relates that she "was the first to give birth to anything, and that she had done so when nothing else had been born, and that she had herself never been born." (Rigoglioso 2010, 29)

Neith, Virgin Goddess, Form of Isis After studying the attributes of Neith as a 7,000-year-old Virgin Mother, the parthenogenetic or virgin-birth capacity of other ancient goddesses becomes so blatantly obvious and cosmologically sound that discussions of whether or not a figure was "really a virgin" seem absurd. As does nitpicking a certain term, as to whether or not it might mean "virgin" or just a "maiden" who is fertile. The bottom line is that we are discussing a cosmological ideal, not real women who possess body parts.

The idea of the self-generating creator is logically female, based on observing nature--that is the virgin-mother concept in a nutshell, and the childish and unsophisticated fairytales placing this entity on Earth as a "real person" pale by comparison. These myths are, in fact, foolish when taken literally. As literal "facts," they are also degrading to women's sexuality, as opposed to the empowerment provided by the concept of the cosmic, formless and transcendent Virgin Mother.

Hera and Heracles

Although I have been studying Greek religion and mythology for decades, including in college and post-graduate studies in Greece itself, I was nonetheless intrigued to review the evidence concerning not only the antiquity of the pre-Olympian goddess Hera as a virgin mother but also her primacy over the male gods, who appear to be later interlopers and usurpers. (Rigoglioso 2010, 69ff)

Indeed, the struggle reflected in the mythology between Hera and Zeus, or the goddess and the god, in ancient Greece appears to have begun around 1,000 BCE and may

have lasted some 300 or so years, before the Olympians finally ascended to the throne. As Rigoglioso remarks:

Before the Greeks as we know them existed, a series of invaders from the east and northeast successively overran the Greek peninsula throughout the second-millennium B.C.E. Such invasions culminated with the Indo-European Dorians, who entered Greece about 1100 B.C.E. and brought what became the language of Greece. They also brought a patriarchal social structure and religion. (Rigoglioso 2010, 11)

Marguerite further states:

Strong indicators that Hera was originally conceived as a parthenogenetic goddess can be found in association with her cult on the island of Samos, located off the coast of ancient Anatolia (Turkey). On Samos, one of the primary and earliest seats of her worship, she was known as Hera Parthenia, "Hera the Virgin"... Such a title was apparently not uncommon in association with this goddess... (Rigoglioso 2010, 69)

Renewing her virginity annually in a river, Hera was nonetheless the mother who gave birth parthenogenetically to the Greek god of the forge, Hephaistos.

Hephaistos, Dionysus and Hera (Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio;
www.theoi.com/Gallery/K7.1B.html)

While Rigoglioso depicts the Greek hero and demigod Heracles (Hercules) as an antagonist to parthenogenesis, I would have liked to have seen a discussion of his own alleged virgin birth both from the mortal woman Alcmene and from Hera herself, as suggested by an older version of the myth that likewise reflects male domination of the matrilineal hierarchy. Speaking of Hera, Dr. Jane Ellen Harrison says, "Her first husband, or rather consort, was Herakles." (Harrison, 491; see also Jung, 539) In this scenario, Hera and Heracles take on the typical role as found around the Near East and Asia Minor: The virgin-mother goddess and her consort-son. The later myth of Zeus raping Alcmene, virgin daughter of Amphitryon, appears to have been serve as yet another instance of the violent usurpation of the virgin-mother goddess motif by the invasion of patriarchal religion.

Also, whereas Rigoglioso (92ff) sees in Heracles's labors the same male-dominant Olympians' overthrow of the goddess, the 12 tasks clearly possess astronomical or astrotheological meanings; yet, her thesis could help explain why these astrotheological events, rather than being joyous events as is found in other myths, are labors in this particular one. It is precisely these sort of factors that shape universal myths and make them culturally unique.

Inviolable Wisdom

Sophia (Celsus Library, Ephesus, Turkey; Photo: RadomilThe concluding chapter, "The Gnostic Sophia: Divine Generative Virgin" by Dr. Angeleen Campa, ties the subject together nicely by providing a bridge between Paganism and Judeo-Christian tradition, as it shows precisely how this ages-old concept of the divine feminine as primordial

creator was demoted, at precisely the same time when Christianity was being formed, with its subordinate female figure of the Virgin Mary. Says Campra:

Sophia rose out of a patriarchal worldview, but I argue that both iterations--Hochma/Sophia of the Wisdom literature of the fifth to first centuries B.C.E. and Sophia of the Valentinian Gnostic myth of the first centuries C.E.--reveal the attributes of the more ancient Virgin Mother deities from the areas neighboring West Asia. (Rigoglioso 2010, 193)

Campra's extensive survey clearly reveals that parthenogenesis was part of the enigmatic Gnostic doctrine, which brings this extremely ancient concept right down to and into the Christian era, with its evident remake of the Virgin Mother Goddess in Mary, whom I and many others contend is a mythical not historical figure, largely based on this widespread and ancient goddess concept.

The Great Matriarchy v. Patriarchy Debate

Rigoglioso's important study goes a long way in resurrecting the works of Marija Gimbutas, Riane Eisler and Merlin Stone in the "Great Matriarchy v. Patriarchy Debate," in which their thesis of Goddess or female primacy has been assailed and claimed to be "discredited," replaced with more oblique terminology describing "partnership" versus "dominator" cultures. Indeed, in this regard Marguerite has come out in support of this earlier research (Rigoglioso 2002) and says in VMGA (9):

Critics of the theory that a matriarchal phase of human history preceded patriarchy will no doubt deride the fact that I am even considering such a concept as basis for this book. Haven't we thoroughly trounced the notion and shown it to be archaeologically and anthropologically untenable or unprovable, after all? Haven't we shown, in fact that matriarchies never existed?

I would argue, no.

Concerning Gimbutas in specific, Rigoglioso also remarks:

Although controversy surrounds Gimbutas's methods and conclusions..., the viewpoint I adopt is in accord with those of archaeologists and other scholars who are verifying and expanding on various aspects of Gimbutas's theories... I believe that, because prominent classics scholars...independently held to similar theoretical views, the assumption of an early matriarchal substratum in Greece, upon which my analysis is based, is built on firm, if not conclusive, footing. (Rigoglioso 2010, 210-11)

Riglioso even suggests that the derision of the opposition to the matriarchal thesis represents "women-on-women violence." (Rigoglioso 2002) In the same essay, Marguerite also says of this academic debate, in which the goddess movement has been assailed:

So the attack has been particularly virulent--involving the even more vicious tactic of professional discrediting when scorn alone won't do--because we pose a threat to the

reigning paradigm.

In the end, Rigoglioso's work also clearly shows the Goddess primacy being overthrown by the male gods and patriarchy, demonstrated through myths and religious, historical and cultural developments over the centuries.

The Root of Female Oppression

It is not simply the solid evidence Rigoglioso puts together so abundantly Patriarchy v. Matriarchy that delights, it is also her very thesis itself that is enticing and refreshing. I thoroughly enjoyed her conclusions, albeit they reflect a tragedy, a violent usurpation riddled with sexism and misogyny that have led to incalculable suffering worldwide over the past three millennia or so. Yet, I was relieved to see this sensible explanation for female oppression within religion and mythology coming to light, as I always am when I read the writings of other writers such as Barbara G. Walker. Indeed, Walker's fantastic work on women's spirituality is beautifully complemented by Rigoglioso's undertaking. These endeavors go far in restoring dignity and respect to the female aspect of creation, so badly derogated, abused, oppressed and enslaved by the patriarchal Abrahamic and other religions the past several thousand years.

Drawbacks and Omissions

The only serious criticism I have of the book is its price, which is unfortunately that of an academic press and too great for the average reader, who will thus miss out on all the fascinating and important information. As a publisher, I know I could make this tome for far less and with many images to boot! Fortunately, it is likely that the book will become available in paperback, as is the case with Rigoglioso's previous work *The Cult of Divine Birth*.

Moreover, for the average reader this book may seem dense and, at times, tedious, as well as challenging because of the academic style of citation that includes the author, year and page number parenthetically in the text, rather than as footnotes or endnotes. Non-scholars may find the style initially distracting or intimidating, but they may also get used to it in their quest to pull out all the gems, which are plentiful.

At certain points, I felt as if the author was overreaching in her conclusions, but such is always the case when one is seriously attempting to prove a controversial thesis with as much evidence as is possible--and it is my studied opinion that Rigoglioso has proved her main thesis of the widespread presence of the virgin-mother goddess concept in antiquity, as well as this mythological motif's overthrow by the male-dominated cultus.

Artemis of Ephesus In addition, as a scholar and enthusiast of the astrotheological meaning of much religious doctrine and many mythical motifs, I would like to have seen more of a discussion of the virgin birth theme as reflecting characteristics of celestial bodies or events, as well as their interaction with the earth and its inhabitants. In this regard, in ancient myths we find a theme of the virgin and inviolable dawn goddess giving birth to the new, morning sun. Likewise, many parthenogenetic goddesses are equated with the earth, moon, Venus and Virgo. In this regard, I was interested in various brief references by Rigoglioso to the moon as it related to certain goddesses,

such as the African Nyame (42) and the Greek Artemis (57, 211).

Importantly, Marguerite and I differ substantially in our conclusions as to what this evidence means in the overall scheme of things. While she avers that the Virgin Mary was a real person, I evince in my numerous books and articles that these various characters, including the Christian figures, represent mythical motifs reflective of ancient nature worship, solar mythology and astrotheology. In this regard, I am of the opinion that VMGA is one of the great works to be used in proving the mythicist position: To wit, while many of the ancients did indeed perceive certain figures such as Hercules or Osiris to have been "real people" who "walked the earth" in remote times - a notion explored most famously by the Greek philosopher Euhemerus (c. 330-260 BCE) - these characters were in fact anthropomorphizations of very ancient, cosmic ideals and concepts. As ancient writers attest and as we know from such simple notions as the days of the week, many of our most important gods and goddesses are unquestionably astrotheological in nature, including the sun and moon gods and goddesses, as well as the various iterations of the planets and constellations. In other words, the personifications of the celestial bodies are clearly not real people, whether or not divine.

Moreover, in the chapter on Demeter and Persephone, whom she demonstrates were "originally conceived as Virgin Mothers" (100), Rigoglioso goes into a lengthy discussion of the rape of the virgin goddess and the ritual use of a phallus by initiates into the Eleusinian Mysteries, both male and female. This section is important for historical purposes, but it may make some readers uncomfortable in its frankness and graphic depictions.

Conclusion

From her style and thoroughness, Dr. Rigoglioso is clearly a first-rate scholar. Yet, some of her thesis will undoubtedly be uncomfortable for many, and if she had composed this work a century ago based on those conclusions she may have been deemed "third rate" by the Catholic Encyclopedia, for example, which disparages with just such a moniker scholars of an earlier era who came to the same deductions. Obviously, these facts are threatening to Christian dogma, showing that the virgin birth is unoriginal and firmly rooted in mythology, not history.

As a passionate scholar of mythical motifs such as the virgin birth, which I have been discussing for nearly 20 years, including in my earliest published book *The Christ Conspiracy* in 1999, I can only wish and hope for other professional scholars like Rigoglioso to tackle all the other common mythical motifs in the same rigorous and unbiased manner. Another such effort that comes to mind is *The Riddle of the Resurrection* by Dr. Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, which basically proves that the motif of a god or goddess resurrecting from the dead is present in the religion and mythology of several pre-Christian cultures, as we would logically expect it to be.

Although it is a scholarly work that may be difficult for some to tackle, *Virgin Mother Goddesses* readily proves Rigoglioso's major points, including and especially the existence in the human psyche, religion and mythology extending back millennia of the concept of a self-generating or parthenogenetic female divine creator. Regardless of the

author and my different opinions as to its overall significance, I feel that Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity is an indispensable resource for scholars and students of comparative religion and mythology, as well as women's spirituality and goddess studies, and I personally will be using it for years to come.

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For more information, see Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity.

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The following article is excerpted from:
Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled

Contrary to popular belief, Easter does not represent the "historical" crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In reality, the gospel tale reflects the annual "crossification" of the sun through the vernal equinox (Spring), at which time the sun is "resurrected," as the day begins to become longer than the night.

Rather than being a "Christian" holiday, Easter celebrations date back into remotest antiquity and are found around the world, as the blossoming of spring did not escape the notice of the ancients, who revered this life-renewing time of the year, when winter had passed and the sun was "born again." The "Pagan" Easter is also the Passover, and Jesus Christ represents not only the sun but also the Passover Lamb ritually sacrificed every year by a number of cultures, including the Egyptians, possibly as early as 4,000 years ago and continuing to this day in some places.
Easter Around the World

'The goddess Ēostre/*Ostara flies through the heavens surrounded by Roman-inspired putti, beams of light, and animals. Germanic peoples look up at the goddess from the realm below.' Easter is "Pessach" in Hebrew, "Pascha" in Greek, "Pachons" in Latin and "Pa-Khonsu" in Egyptian, "Khonsu" being an epithet for the sun god Horus. In Anglo-Saxon, Easter or Eostre is goddess of the dawn, corresponding to Ishtar, Astarte, Astoreth and Isis. The word "Easter" shares the same root with "east" and "eastern," the

direction of the rising sun.

"The Phrygian sun and fertility god Attis was annually hung on a tree, dying and rising on March 24th and 25th, an 'Easter celebration' that occurred at Rome as well."

The principal Mexican solar festival was held at the vernal equinox, i.e., Easter, when sacrifices were made to sustain the sun. In India, the vernal equinox festival is called "Holi" and is especially sacred to the god Krishna. The Phrygian sun and fertility god Attis was annually hung on a tree, dying and rising on March 24th and 25th, an "Easter celebration" that occurred at Rome as well. The March dates were later applied to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ: "Thus," says Sir Frazer, "the tradition which placed the death of Christ on the twenty-fifth of March was ancient and deeply rooted. It is all the more remarkable because astronomical considerations prove that it can have had no historical foundation...." This "coincidence" between the deaths and resurrections of Christ and the older Attis was not lost on early Christians, whom it distressed and caused to use the "devil got there first" excuse for the motif's presence in pre-Christian paganism.

The rites of the "crucified Adonis," another dying and rising savior god, were also celebrated in Syria at Easter time. As Frazer states:

"When we reflect how often the Church has skillfully contrived to plant the seeds of the new faith on the old stock of paganism, we may surmise that the Easter celebration of the dead and risen Christ was grafted upon a similar celebration of the dead and risen Adonis, which, as we have seen reason to believe, was celebrated in Syria at the same season."

The salvific death and resurrection at Easter of the god, the initiation as remover of sin, and the notion of becoming "born again," are all ages-old Pagan motifs or mysteries rehashed in the later Christianity. The all-important death-and-resurrection motif is exemplified in the "Parisian magical papyrus," a Pagan text ostensibly unaffected by Christianity:

"Lord, being born again I perish in that I am being exalted, and having been exalted I die; from a life-giving birth being born into death I was thus freed and go the way which Thou has founded, as Thou hast ordained and hast made the mystery."

Easter's Roving Date is Astrotheological

Crossification In the gospel tale, there are two dates for the crucifixion: the 14th and the 15th of the month of Nisan, and within Christianity the date for Easter was debated for centuries. There continue to be two dates for Easter: the Western Catholic and Eastern Orthodox, thus demonstrating that this holiday is not the historical date of the actual crucifixion of a particular man. The dates are, in fact, astronomical, astrological and astrotheological.

In explaining this roving date, one "distinguished churchman," as Catholic Church

historian Eusebius called him, Anatolius, revealed the meaning of Easter and of Christ, as well as the fact that astrology was a known and respected science used in Christianity. Said Anatolius:

"On this day [March 22] the sun is found not only to have reached the first sign of the Zodiac, but to be already passing through the fourth day within it. This sign is generally known as the first of the twelve, the equinoctial sign, the beginning of months, head of the cycle, and start of the planetary course.... Aristobolus adds that it is necessary at the Passover Festival that not only the sun but the moon as well should be passing through an equinoctial sign. There are two of these signs, one in spring, one in autumn, diametrically opposed to each other...."

In establishing the "Paschal festival," Church father Anatolius thus based his calculations on the positions of the sun and moon during the vernal equinox. Christ as the Solar Hero

Jesus as the Sun God throughout HistoryThe need to time the Easter celebration - or resurrection - to coincide with the vernal equinox demonstrates that "Christ" is not an historical personage but the sun. This fact of Easter being the resurrection of the Sun has been well known for centuries, just as "the Savior's" birth at the winter solstice has been recognized as another solar motif. Another obvious clue as to Christ's nature is the fact that the "Lord's Day" is Sunday.

"Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, with 'divine beams.'"

Concerning Easter, in his "Letter I. for 329" Bishop of Alexandria Athanasius (c. 293-373) remarks, "Again, 'the Sun of Righteousness,' causing His divine beams to rise upon us, proclaims beforehand the time of the feast, in which, obeying Him, we ought to celebrate it..." Christ is thus the Sun of Righteousness, with "divine beams."
The Paschal Chronicle

The Easter calculations were recomputed in the seventh century by the Christian author(s) of the Paschal Chronicle or Alexandria Chronicle, which seeks to establish a Christian chronology from "creation" to the year 628. The Paschal Chronicle determines the proper date for Easter as March 21st and the date of Christ's resurrection as March 25th (or, midnight, March 24, three days after the beginning of the equinox). In his various calculations, the Chronicle author discusses solar and lunar cycles, including the 19-year lunar cycle, by which he reckons the crucifixion and resurrection, concluding: "This is consistent with the prior determinations of reputable men in the calculation of the heavenly bodies." To wit, Christ's death and resurrection are based on astrotheology.

The Chronicle author further confirms that Christianity is a continuation of the ancient "Pagan" astrotheological religion when he states that the "Annunciation of our Lady," i.e., the conception of Christ by the Virgin Mary, likewise occurred on March 25th, the vernal equinox, exactly nine months prior to the December 25th birthdate, the annual rebirth of the sun.

For more information, including citations, see Suns of God.

See also:

Easter: The Resurrection of Spring
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Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled

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"In the ancient world there was a very widespread belief in the sufferings and deaths of gods as being beneficial to man. Adonis, Attis, Dionysos, Herakles, Mithra, Osiris, and other deities, were all saviour-gods whose deaths were regarded as sacrifices made on behalf of mankind; and it is to be noticed that in almost every case there is clear evidence that the god sacrificed himself to himself."

Sir Arthur Weigall, The Paganism in Our Christianity

"Osiris...was successively god of the Nile, a life-giver, a sun-god, god of justice and love, and finally a resurrected god who ruled in the afterlife.... The most popular legend about Osiris is one of a resurrected god. He was killed by Set, the god of darkness... Osiris was then resurrected and went to live on high. Osiris became the first of a long line of resurrected deities—Tammuz, Mithras, Balder, Christ. Every spring the life of Osiris was re-enacted at Abydos in a stirring passion play, dating back to the eighteenth or nineteenth century before Christ. This play is the earliest record in history of drama."

Gerald L. Berry, Religions of the World

"Osiris or the sun was now worshipped throughout the whole world, though under different names. He was the Mithra of the Persians, the Brahma of India, the Baal or Adonis of the Phoenicians, the Apollo of the Greeks, the Odin Of Scandinavia, the Hu of the Britons, and the Baiwe of the Laplanders."

W. Winwood Reade, The Veil of Isis; Or, Mysteries of the Druids

Over the millennia, the great God Sun has been revered and worshipped around the globe, taking on many manifestations, depending on the solar aspect, as well as the ethnicity, race and other cultural factor of its devotees. In this regard, there have been numerous sun gods, with a variety of names and exploits. Despite the obliteration over

the ages, there remains a significant amount of information regarding these gods; hence, we will address only the most salient to our present quest, as concisely as possible.

Osiris, God Sun

The Egyptian pantheon is highly important because Egyptian culture reached tremendous peaks and its influence has been found in much of the world over a period of centuries and millennia. Although it is perceived as a riotous "polytheism," the Egyptian religion was, like that of many cultures, polytheistic, pantheistic, monotheistic and henotheistic at once. In fact, it would be more accurate to refer to Egyptian cultures and religions, as these varied more or less widely over the thousands of years. As concerns Egypt's monotheism, famed Egyptologist E. Wallis Budge related that a number of Egyptologists of his time "have come to the opinion that the dwellers in the Nile valley, from the earliest times, knew and worshipped one God, nameless, incomprehensible, and eternal."

Polytheism and monotheism were "co-existent" in Egypt, flourishing "side by side" already in the 5th dynasty (25th century bce), long before Akhenaton (14th century) and the Mosaic "discovery" of the "one god." Concerning the nature of the Egyptian religion, Budge also says:

From a number of passages drawn from texts of all periods it is clear that the form in which God made himself manifest to man upon the earth was the sun, which the Egyptians called Ra and that all other gods and goddesses were forms of him.

Egyptian sun god Ra in his solar boat, c. 1200 BCE Although Ra is the "chief" sun god, in the Egyptian pantheon sun gods "come before us in wild confusion," and numerous others possess solar attributes. In the "British Museum Papyrus" of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, parts of which may date to 7,000 years ago, the God Sun Ra is called, "the lord of heaven, the lord of earth, the king of righteousness, the lord of eternity, the prince of everlasting, ruler of gods all, god of life, maker of eternity, creator of heaven." The bulk of these epithets were later used to describe the Christian solar logos, Jesus. That the rest of the Egyptian pantheon were all forms of Ra or the sun means that they shared at least some of these divine attributes as well. A number of these gods were "sons of Ra," regarding whom Kuhn states: "In Egyptian scriptures the twelve sons of Ra (the twelve sons of Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Israel) were called the 'twelve saviors of the treasure of light.'"

One of the solar Ra's sons and remakes was the savior Osiris, who, along with his lunar wife, Isis, became two of the most popular gods ever to be conceived by the human mind. Worshipped in one form or another over a period of millennia, Osiris and Isis were widely esteemed in the ancient world, and entire cultures were established around them, including a huge amount of art and literature, as well as massive and magnificent edifices and sanctuaries, etc. Like today's supposed apparitions of "Jesus" and the "Virgin Mary," ancient gods such as Osiris and Isis often appeared to their numerous followers, centuries and millennia prior to the Christian era.

Osiris is thus a very old god, whose worship dated to thousands of years before the common era and who was one of the most powerful gods ever devised. As time went on, he took on the attributes of countless other gods and became the "king of kings" and "lord of lords," as he was called in the Egyptian texts. During the late 18th to early 19th dynasties (c. 1300 bce), Osiris's epithets included, "the king of eternity, the lord of everlastingness, who traverseth millions of years in the duration of his life, the firstborn son of the womb of Nut, begotten of Seb, the prince of gods and men, the god of gods, the king of kings, the lord of lords, the prince of princes, the governor of the world whose existence is for everlasting." At Osiris's birth a voice proclaimed, "The ruler of all the earth is born." As can be seen, this exalted, divine status is entirely unoriginal with the Christian savior, as it long pre-dates Christ's purported advent.

Osiris as Creator

On a stela dating from the 18th Dynasty (1570-1070 bce) appears a hymn to Osiris that, per Christian Egyptologist Budge's translation, reads in part:

Thou hast made this earth by thy hand, and the waters thereof, and the wind thereof, the herb thereof, all the cattle thereof, all the winged fowl thereof, all the fish thereof, all the creeping things thereof, and all the four-footed beasts thereof.

The similarities between this passage as translated and the biblical creation account written centuries later are striking. In Genesis (1:24), "God" creates the earth and says:

Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds; cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.

The Carpentras Inscription in Phoenician, which says, in part: 'Blessed be Ta-Bai, daughter of Ta-Hapi, Priest of Osiris Eloh... Justified before Osiris...'

It is clear that Osiris was the Most High God of Creation, equivalent to Yahweh. Indeed, a Phoenician inscription invokes "Osiris Eloh," Eloh being "the name used by the Ten Tribes of Israel for the Elohim of Two Tribes." The Hebrew "Elohim," a plural term, is used over 2600 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, translated most often as "God" in the singular.

It is not surprising that Genesis and other biblical texts, concepts and stories are largely Egyptian in origin, especially since Israel and Egypt are in such proximity. The historical, literary and archaeological evidence of the influence of Egypt on the Levant is abundant and includes the presence of Osiris in Israel. In an article in the Biblical Archaeology Review (5-6/00) entitled, "What's an Egyptian Temple Doing in Jerusalem?" Gabriel Barkay states:

The name of Osiris appears on an inscribed stele fragment of reddish Nubia sandstone discovered at Hazor in northern Israel and on stelae found at Deir el-Balah, in the Gaza Strip. It seems that this Egyptian deity was especially popular in Canaan, when it was under Egyptian domination.

Artifacts and historical records prove Egyptian presence and influence in the Levant, prior to the rise of the Hebrew/Israelite/Jewish people, and it is apparent that the Canaanite and Israelite peoples were infused with the Osiris myth, which thus affected their own religions, including the Judaic offshoot, Christianity. Like Jesus, Osiris was once believed to have incarnated as a human savior who died and was resurrected for the good of mankind:

Osiris has a human development. He is God in heaven and hell, but once appeared as man on earth.

He is one of the Saviours or Deliverers of Humanity, to be found in almost all lands. As such, he is born into the world. He came, as a benefactor, to relieve man of trouble, to supply his wants. In his efforts to do good, he encounters evil. He is killed. Osiris is buried. His tomb was the object of pilgrimage for thousands of years. But he did not rest in his grave. At the end of three days, or forty, he rose again, and ascended of heaven.

Diodorus Siculus

Diodorus Siculus's 'Antiquities of Egypt,' translated by Edwin Murphy In addition to the numerous Egyptian texts and the writings of Herodotus and Plutarch, one ancient source for information regarding Osiris and other Egyptian gods is Diodorus Siculus (c. 90-21 bce), a contemporary of Julius Caesar and a Greek citizen of Sicily. Less than half of the 40 books he wrote still exist, with the others either allowed to perish or deliberately destroyed in the centuries of book-burning and general vandalism and mayhem committed by the Catholic Church and others. In his book The Antiquities of Egypt, Siculus first declares that Osiris is the sun and Isis the moon:

"Now when the ancient Egyptians, awestruck and wondering, turned their eyes to the heavens, they concluded that two gods, the sun and the moon, were primeval and eternal; and they called the former Osiris, the latter Isis."

Siculus also relates, "Some of the early Greek mythologists call Osiris 'Dionysos,'" who, per the poet Eumolpos, shines like a star, "eyes aflame with rays." Thus, Osiris is not only the "Sun-God of Amenti, the region of the dead" but also "the Egyptian Bacchus" or Dionysus, the notorious Greek/Thracian god of the vine. Diodorus furthers states that, like Dionysus, Osiris is a "son of Zeus" who was raised at "Nysa, in Arabia Felix, not far from Egypt."

In telling the Osiris myth, Diodorus paradoxically lapses into the evermerist perspective that Osiris was a "real person" who walked the earth, did marvelous things, and then attained to immortality after death, again as was later said of Christ, Osiris's "Jewish" counterpart. As a mortal, Osiris "conquered" India, where he "founded many cities," including another Nysa, where he planted ivy. Osiris "left in that country many other indications of his presence, by which the latter-day Indians were persuaded to claim the god and assert that he was born in India." Rather than representing the travels of a "real man," the tale records the worship of Osiris making its way to India and elsewhere in a remote age.

Ancient Chaldean priests observing the skies

The spread of the Egyptian culture included a purported migration to Mesopotamia, with the Egyptian priesthood supposedly becoming the famous "Chaldeans." Diodorus Siculus relates the Egyptians as maintaining that "a large number" of their colonies went "into the civilized world," with "Belus" taking his colonists to Babylon, where he "appointed priests [Chaldeans] who were exempt from taxes and free of all civic obligations, just like those of Egypt." Another colony went with Danaus to Argos, "nearly the oldest city in Greece." Diodorus also writes that the Egyptians claimed the Athenians and the Colchians of Pontus as their own, and that "the Jews lying between Syria and Arabia, were also settled by certain expatriates from Egypt." This latter assertion explains why the male children of these ethnicities are circumcised, as circumcision is "age-old custom imported from Egypt."

Diodorus continues his travelogue, stating that Osiris "ranged over the entire inhabited world," bringing with him culture and the vine, as well as beer. Osiris then returned to Egypt, loaded with gifts from "every country," and was deified after his death. Diodorus also describes the origin of certain rituals, e.g., the focus on wine and not cutting one's hair practiced by a widespread brotherhood that in Palestine would become known as Nazarites or Nazarenes, major players in the creation of Christianity.

Solar Attributes

In spite of the rampant evemerism regarding the Osirian earth-wandering legend, Osiris is essentially the sun, regularly identified as such in the Egyptian Bible, the Book of the Dead. In addition to those numerous texts, the hymn to Osiris from the stela previously cited continues thus:

O thou son of Nut, the whole world is gratified when thou ascendest thy father's throne like Ra. Thou shinest in the horizon, thou sendest forth thy light into the darkness, thou makest the darkness light with thy double plume, and thou floodest the world with light like the Disk at break of day.

Osiris as the Djed Pillar holding the Disc of the Sun God Ra, surrounded by Isis and Nephthys, Egyptian Book of the Dead, Ani Papyrus Osiris's solar nature is laid plain, by those who both worshipped and created him. Like that of other nations, including India, Egyptian mythology is complex, and Osiris also represents the light in the sun and moon. As Osiris took on the attributes of other gods, he eventually became the god of the afterlife, which is also a solar attribute. As Budge says, "The deceased is always identified with Osiris, or the sun which has set, the judge and god of the dead." Like the sun, the newly dead must pass through the Hall of Judgment (nighttime) before proceeding "to the east to begin a new existence."

In the same hymn above, Osiris's "sister" Isis is described in lunar terms, and Isis and Osiris's child, Horus, is said to have "waxed strong in the house of Seb." Seb is Osiris's earthly "father"; yet, it is clear that Horus—who is not only the son but also the father of Osiris, who is thus the "father and son of Horus"—is likewise a "son of Seb" in the same

way that Jesus is the "son of David." Seb is also known as "Geb," and "Horus the Elder was believed to be the son of Geb and Nut." In addition, Seb is "Io-sef," or Joseph; hence, like Jesus, Horus is the "son of Joseph."

Osiris's "once-and-future son," Horus, represents the solar orb renewed at the winter solstice. On her temple at Sais, Horus's mother, Isis, is depicted as saying, "The fruit that I have brought forth is the Sun." The major solar roles include the sun as a child when rising and as an old man when setting. The sun is also a child at the winter solstice ("Christmas"), a youth at the vernal equinox or spring, a bearded man in his strength at the summer solstice, and an old man at the autumnal equinox. Concerning Horus, or the renewed solar incarnation, Olcott says:

In the Sun-God Horus we see the dawn personified, and the triumphant conqueror of the shades of darkness and the demons of the underworld emerges in the glorious light of victory each morning. He was figured as the eldest son of Osiris, a strong and vigorous youth, who avenged his father by waging a successful war against the monster who had swallowed him up.

Horus is depicted in the inscriptions as sailing forth from the underworld up the eastern sky at dawn, piercing the great python, born of night, as he advances.

Battling the Prince of Darkness

Egyptian god Set or Seth Like Jesus, Ra, Osiris and Horus all battle with Satan, i.e., Apep, Set or Typhon, as is typical of the God Sun, whose enemy is the "serpent" of night and darkness, the sun-devouring monster present in "nearly every mythology." In the Egyptian mythology, as in the Christian, Apep/Set is "thrown from his high estate" to become a devil. In addition, one of the several appellations of Horus was "Jaoai, which is also "laoai," essentially the same as "lao," the Egyptian epithet adopted by Jews that became equated with "Yahweh." Also, one of Ra's daughters is named "Iousaas," which is intriguingly similar to "Joshua" and "Jesus" or Iasios, as was one form of the name in Greek.

The story of Osiris's death and resurrection has been the source of much discussion, especially since it is so similar to the Christian myth but pre-dates the latter by millennia. In the various Osirian legends, the "great python," Osiris's "brother and rival," Typhon or Set/Sata, swallows Osiris up, or in Plutarch's version, throws Osiris's body into the Nile. Osiris's renewed incarnation/son, Horus, kills Set or Sata, the night sky, darkness, desolation and fertility-destroying pestilence. The destruction of the god by the "Prince of darkness," represents the overthrow of the sun and its light reflected in the moon. The dismemberment of Osiris into 14 pieces represents the 14 days of the month when the moon is waning and the sun's light in it is "dying." Osiris's passion was said to take place on the 17th day of the month of Hathor, "when Osiris was in the twenty-eighth year either of his reign or of his age," the number 28 representing the days in the lunar month. Osiris's body parts were said to have been retrieved and buried in separate sacred sites by Isis. As is common in priestcraft, there were many tombs of Osiris in Egypt and Arabia, a development that reflects the mythical nature of Osiris, not that he

was a "real person" interred in all these places.
The Passion of Osiris

The Passion and Resurrection of Osiris have been major mythical motifs that made their way into Christianity: "That the Passion as it was distinctly called and Resurrection of Osiris were yearly and openly celebrated by the worshippers of the Alexandrian gods with alternate demonstrations of grief and joy, the classical poets have put beyond doubt." The closeness to the much later Christ myth is unmistakable, as "Osiris was to his worshippers 'the god-man, the first of those who rose from the dead,' [whose] death and resurrection were therefore supposed to be in some way beneficial to mankind." Concerning this ancient, pre-Christian ritual, Budge relates:

...we find that the doctrine of eternal life and of the resurrection of a glorified or transformed body, based upon the ancient story of the resurrection of Osiris after a cruel death and horrible mutilation, inflicted by the powers of evil, was the same in all periods [of Egyptian history], and that the legends of the most ancient times were accepted without material alteration or addition in the texts of the later dynasties.

...everywhere, and in texts of all periods, the life, sufferings, death and resurrection of Osiris are accepted as facts universally admitted.

Horus raising Osiris from the Dead

Thus, the Passion and Resurrection of Christ are archetypal, not actual, representing a common religious and mythical motif, not the death and resurrection of a "real person." The archetypal death and resurrection of the god provide a spiritual example for his followers: "Osiris was regarded as the principal cause of human resurrection, and he was capable of giving life after death because he had attained to it. He was entitled 'Eternity and Everlastingness,' and he it was who made men and women born again." This mystery of the resurrection is depicted in thousands of tombs in the Nile valley: "Osiris died and rose again from the dead, so all men hoped to arise like him from death to life eternal." These important religious and spiritual concepts were popular in Egypt "from very early times," long before the purported advent of Christ. Also, when the god was reborn, "a loud voice was heard throughout all the world saying, 'The lord of all earth is born!'" Indeed, "it is astonishing to find that, at least, five thousand years ago men trusted an Osiris as a risen Saviour, and confidently hoped to rise, as he arose, from the grave."

The Empty Tomb, Blood as Wine, Good Friday

In his mockery of Pagans, Christian writer Minucius Felix (3rd cent.) revealed that the Egyptians, and afterwards the Romans, beheld an empty tomb of Osiris or Serapis, another motif found in the later Christian myth. In addition to being placed in a tomb, Osiris was also covered in a shroud, relics of which were exhibited by unscrupulous priests long before the Christian era, a tradition continued with the two dozen or so bogus shrouds possessed by medieval churches including the infamous "Shroud of Turin" much ballyhooed to this day.

Another Egyptian tradition adopted by Christianity is the notion of the blood of the god being represented by wine, as described in a magic papyrus in the British Museum addressed to "Asklepios of Memphis." It is noteworthy that the heart of fine viniculture in Egypt was Mareotis, the Therapeutan cult center outside of Alexandria, the crucible of Christianity, which plagiarizes the water-to-wine motif and emphasizes Jesus's role as a winebibber.

As do Christians today, the millions of followers of Osiris were quite certain that, even though he was the Omnipotent Lord of Lord and King of Kings, he had at some point walked the earth. As Bonwick relates:

...he was a person who had lived and died. They had no manner of doubt about it. Did they not know his birthplace? Did they not celebrate his birth by the most elaborate ceremonies, with cradle, lights, etc.? Did they not hold his tomb at Abydos? Did they not annually celebrate at the Holy Sepulchre his resurrection? Did they not commemorate his death by the Eucharist, eating the Sacred Cake, after it had been consecrated by the priests, and become veritable flesh of his flesh?

Providing further evidence of Osiris's pre-Christian role as a dying and rising savior god, several early Church fathers, including Athanasius, Augustine, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Minucius Felix, Lactantius and Firmicus, discussed the Egyptian god's death as mourned "every good Friday."

Osiris surrounded by Twelve Stars and Circles (Hornung, 'The Valley of the Kings,' 94) The death and resurrection of the sun god have astrotheological meaning, signifying the waxing and waning of the moon, which reflects the sun's light, as well as the daily rising and setting of the sun and the annual shortening and lengthening of the day. As part of his astrotheological journey, Osiris "traverses the twelve sections of the Duat," and, as the sun god, Osiris has twelve companions—the Signs of the Zodiac." Thus, in the myth of Osiris is the great teaching god with the twelve disciples who dies and resurrects, millennia before the Christian era. The evidence abundantly points to Jesus Christ as a nearly identical, mythical remake of the highly popular Osiris, whose story was known by millions of pilgrims for thousands of years in precisely the same areas in which the Christian myth arose.

For more information, including citations for the above excerpt, see *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled*. See also *Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection*.

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Contrary to popular belief, Easter does not represent the "historical" crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In reality, the gospel tale reflects the annual "crossification" of the sun through the vernal equinox (Spring), at which time the sun is "resurrected," as the day begins to become longer than the night.

Rather than being a "Christian" holiday, Easter celebrations date back into remotest antiquity and are found around the world, as the blossoming of spring did not escape the notice of the ancients, who revered this life-renewing time of the year, when winter had passed and the sun was "born again." The "Pagan" Easter is also the Passover, and Jesus Christ represents not only the sun but also the Passover Lamb ritually sacrificed every year by a number of cultures, including the Egyptians, possibly as early as 4,000 years ago and continuing to this day in some places.

Easter Around the World

'The goddess Ēostre/*Ostara flies through the heavens surrounded by Roman-inspired putti, beams of light, and animals. Germanic peoples look up at the goddess from the realm below.' Easter is "Pessach" in Hebrew, "Pascha" in Greek, "Pachons" in Latin and "Pa-Khonsu" in Egyptian, "Khonsu" being an epithet for the sun god Horus. In Anglo-Saxon, Easter or Eostre is goddess of the dawn, corresponding to Ishtar, Astarte, Astoreth and Isis. The word "Easter" shares the same root with "east" and "eastern," the direction of the rising sun.

"The Phrygian sun and fertility god Attis was annually hung on a tree, dying and rising on March 24th and 25th, an 'Easter celebration' that occurred at Rome as well."

The principal Mexican solar festival was held at the vernal equinox, i.e., Easter, when sacrifices were made to sustain the sun. In India, the vernal equinox festival is called "Holi" and is especially sacred to the god Krishna. The Phrygian sun and fertility god Attis was annually hung on a tree, dying and rising on March 24th and 25th, an "Easter celebration" that occurred at Rome as well. The March dates were later applied to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ: "Thus," says Sir Frazer, "the tradition which placed the death of Christ on the twenty-fifth of March was ancient and deeply rooted. It is all the more remarkable because astronomical considerations prove that it can have had no historical foundation...." This "coincidence" between the deaths and resurrections of Christ and the older Attis was not lost on early Christians, whom it distressed and caused to use the "devil got there first" excuse for the motif's presence in pre-Christian paganism.

The rites of the "crucified Adonis," another dying and rising savior god, were also celebrated in Syria at Easter time. As Frazer states:

"When we reflect how often the Church has skillfully contrived to plant the seeds of the new faith on the old stock of paganism, we may surmise that the Easter celebration of the dead and risen Christ was grafted upon a similar celebration of the dead and risen Adonis, which, as we have seen reason to believe, was celebrated in Syria at the same season."

The salvific death and resurrection at Easter of the god, the initiation as remover of sin, and the notion of becoming "born again," are all ages-old Pagan motifs or mysteries rehearsed in the later Christianity. The all-important death-and-resurrection motif is exemplified in the "Parisian magical papyrus," a Pagan text ostensibly unaffected by Christianity:

"Lord, being born again I perish in that I am being exalted, and having been exalted I die; from a life-giving birth being born into death I was thus freed and go the way which Thou has founded, as Thou hast ordained and hast made the mystery."

Easter's Roving Date is Astrotheological

CrossificationIn the gospel tale, there are two dates for the crucifixion: the 14th and the 15th of the month of Nisan, and within Christianity the date for Easter was debated for centuries. There continue to be two dates for Easter: the Western Catholic and Eastern Orthodox, thus demonstrating that this holiday is not the historical date of the actual crucifixion of a particular man. The dates are, in fact, astronomical, astrological and astrotheological.

In explaining this roving date, one "distinguished churchman," as Catholic Church historian Eusebius called him, Anatolius, revealed the meaning of Easter and of Christ, as well as the fact that astrology was a known and respected science used in Christianity. Said Anatolius:

"On this day [March 22] the sun is found not only to have reached the first sign of the Zodiac, but to be already passing through the fourth day within it. This sign is generally known as the first of the twelve, the equinoctial sign, the beginning of months, head of the cycle, and start of the planetary course.... Aristobolus adds that it is necessary at the Passover Festival that not only the sun but the moon as well should be passing through an equinoctial sign. There are two of these signs, one in spring, one in autumn, diametrically opposed to each other...."

In establishing the "Paschal festival," Church father Anatolius thus based his calculations on the positions of the sun and moon during the vernal equinox.
Christ as the Solar Hero

Jesus as the Sun God throughout HistoryThe need to time the Easter celebration - or resurrection - to coincide with the vernal equinox demonstrates that "Christ" is not an historical personage but the sun. This fact of Easter being the resurrection of the Sun has been well known for centuries, just as "the Savior's" birth at the winter solstice has been recognized as another solar motif. Another obvious clue as to Christ's nature is the fact that the "Lord's Day" is Sunday.

"Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, with 'divine beams.'"

Concerning Easter, in his "Letter I. for 329" Bishop of Alexandria Athanasius (c.

293-373) remarks, "Again, 'the Sun of Righteousness,' causing His divine beams to rise upon us, proclaims beforehand the time of the feast, in which, obeying Him, we ought to celebrate it..." Christ is thus the Sun of Righteousness, with "divine beams."
The Paschal Chronicle

The Easter calculations were recomputed in the seventh century by the Christian author(s) of the Paschal Chronicle or Alexandria Chronicle, which seeks to establish a Christian chronology from "creation" to the year 628. The Paschal Chronicle determines the proper date for Easter as March 21st and the date of Christ's resurrection as March 25th (or, midnight, March 24, three days after the beginning of the equinox). In his various calculations, the Chronicle author discusses solar and lunar cycles, including the 19-year lunar cycle, by which he reckons the crucifixion and resurrection, concluding: "This is consistent with the prior determinations of reputable men in the calculation of the heavenly bodies." To wit, Christ's death and resurrection are based on astrotheology.

The Chronicle author further confirms that Christianity is a continuation of the ancient "Pagan" astrotheological religion when he states that the "Annunciation of our Lady," i.e., the conception of Christ by the Virgin Mary, likewise occurred on March 25th, the vernal equinox, exactly nine months prior to the December 25th birthdate, the annual rebirth of the sun.

For more information, including citations, see Suns of God.

See also:

Easter: The Resurrection of Spring
Easter or Ishtar - What's the truth?
Moses, the Promised Land and Easter

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Osiris The Lord: Out of Egypt

by D.M. Murdock/Acharya S

Excerpted from:

Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled

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"In the ancient world there was a very widespread belief in the sufferings and deaths of gods as being beneficial to man. Adonis, Attis, Dionysos, Herakles, Mithra, Osiris, and other deities, were all saviour-gods whose deaths were regarded as sacrifices made on behalf of mankind; and it is to be noticed that in almost every case there is clear evidence that the god sacrificed himself to himself."

Sir Arthur Weigall, The Paganism in Our Christianity

"Osiris...was successively god of the Nile, a life-giver, a sun-god, god of justice and love, and finally a resurrected god who ruled in the afterlife.... The most popular legend about Osiris is one of a resurrected god. He was killed by Set, the god of darkness... Osiris was then resurrected and went to live on high. Osiris became the first of a long line of resurrected deities—Tammuz, Mithras, Balder, Christ. Every spring the life of Osiris was re-enacted at Abydos in a stirring passion play, dating back to the eighteenth or nineteenth century before Christ. This play is the earliest record in history of drama."

Gerald L. Berry, Religions of the World

"Osiris or the sun was now worshipped throughout the whole world, though under different names. He was the Mithra of the Persians, the Brahma of India, the Baal or Adonis of the Phoenicians, the Apollo of the Greeks, the Odin Of Scandinavia, the Hu of the Britons, and the Baiwe of the Laplanders."

W. Winwood Reade, The Veil of Isis; Or, Mysteries of the Druids

Over the millennia, the great God Sun has been revered and worshipped around the globe, taking on many manifestations, depending on the solar aspect, as well as the ethnicity, race and other cultural factor of its devotees. In this regard, there have been numerous sun gods, with a variety of names and exploits. Despite the obliteration over the ages, there remains a significant amount of information regarding these gods; hence, we will address only the most salient to our present quest, as concisely as possible.

Osiris, God Sun

The Egyptian pantheon is highly important because Egyptian culture reached tremendous peaks and its influence has been found in much of the world over a period of centuries and millennia. Although it is perceived as a riotous "polytheism," the Egyptian religion was, like that of many cultures, polytheistic, pantheistic, monotheistic and henotheistic at once. In fact, it would be more accurate to refer to Egyptian cultures and religions, as these varied more or less widely over the thousands of years. As concerns Egypt's monotheism, famed Egyptologist E. Wallis Budge related that a number of Egyptologists of his time "have come to the opinion that the dwellers in the Nile valley, from the earliest times, knew and worshipped one God, nameless, incomprehensible, and eternal."

Polytheism and monotheism were "co-existent" in Egypt, flourishing "side by side" already in the 5th dynasty (25th century bce), long before Akhenaton (14th century) and the Mosaic "discovery" of the "one god." Concerning the nature of the Egyptian religion, Budge also says:

From a number of passages drawn from texts of all periods it is clear that the form in which God made himself manifest to man upon the earth was the sun, which the Egyptians called Ra and that all other gods and goddesses were forms of him.

Egyptian sun god Ra in his solar boat, c. 1200 BCE Although Ra is the "chief" sun god,

in the Egyptian pantheon sun gods "come before us in wild confusion," and numerous others possess solar attributes. In the "British Museum Papyrus" of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, parts of which may date to 7,000 years ago, the God Sun Ra is called, "the lord of heaven, the lord of earth, the king of righteousness, the lord of eternity, the prince of everlasting, ruler of gods all, god of life, maker of eternity, creator of heaven." The bulk of these epithets were later used to describe the Christian solar logos, Jesus. That the rest of the Egyptian pantheon were all forms of Ra or the sun means that they shared at least some of these divine attributes as well. A number of these gods were "sons of Ra," regarding whom Kuhn states: "In Egyptian scriptures the twelve sons of Ra (the twelve sons of Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Israel) were called the 'twelve saviors of the treasure of light.'"

One of the solar Ra's sons and remakes was the savior Osiris, who, along with his lunar wife, Isis, became two of the most popular gods ever to be conceived by the human mind. Worshipped in one form or another over a period of millennia, Osiris and Isis were widely esteemed in the ancient world, and entire cultures were established around them, including a huge amount of art and literature, as well as massive and magnificent edifices and sanctuaries, etc. Like today's supposed apparitions of "Jesus" and the "Virgin Mary," ancient gods such as Osiris and Isis often appeared to their numerous followers, centuries and millennia prior to the Christian era.

Osiris is thus a very old god, whose worship dated to thousands of years before the common era and who was one of the most powerful gods ever devised. As time went on, he took on the attributes of countless other gods and became the "king of kings" and "lord of lords," as he was called in the Egyptian texts. During the late 18th to early 19th dynasties (c. 1300 bce), Osiris's epithets included, "the king of eternity, the lord of everlastingness, who traverseth millions of years in the duration of his life, the firstborn son of the womb of Nut, begotten of Seb, the prince of gods and men, the god of gods, the king of kings, the lord of lords, the prince of princes, the governor of the world whose existence is for everlasting." At Osiris's birth a voice proclaimed, "The ruler of all the earth is born." As can be seen, this exalted, divine status is entirely unoriginal with the Christian savior, as it long pre-dates Christ's purported advent.

Osiris as Creator

On a stela dating from the 18th Dynasty (1570-1070 bce) appears a hymn to Osiris that, per Christian Egyptologist Budge's translation, reads in part:

Thou hast made this earth by thy hand, and the waters thereof, and the wind thereof, the herb thereof, all the cattle thereof, all the winged fowl thereof, all the fish thereof, all the creeping things thereof, and all the four-footed beasts thereof.

The similarities between this passage as translated and the biblical creation account written centuries later are striking. In Genesis (1:24), "God" creates the earth and says:

Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds; cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.

The Carpentras Inscription in Phoenician, which says, in part: 'Blessed be Ta-Bai, daughter of Ta-Hapi, Priest of Osiris Eloh... Justified before Osiris...'

It is clear that Osiris was the Most High God of Creation, equivalent to Yahweh. Indeed, a Phoenician inscription invokes "Osiris Eloh," Eloh being "the name used by the Ten Tribes of Israel for the Elohim of Two Tribes." The Hebrew "Elohim," a plural term, is used over 2600 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, translated most often as "God" in the singular.

It is not surprising that Genesis and other biblical texts, concepts and stories are largely Egyptian in origin, especially since Israel and Egypt are in such proximity. The historical, literary and archaeological evidence of the influence of Egypt on the Levant is abundant and includes the presence of Osiris in Israel. In an article in the Biblical Archaeology Review (5-6/00) entitled, "What's an Egyptian Temple Doing in Jerusalem?" Gabriel Barkay states:

The name of Osiris appears on an inscribed stele fragment of reddish Nubia sandstone discovered at Hazor in northern Israel and on stelae found at Deir el-Balah, in the Gaza Strip. It seems that this Egyptian deity was especially popular in Canaan, when it was under Egyptian domination.

Artifacts and historical records prove Egyptian presence and influence in the Levant, prior to the rise of the Hebrew/Israelite/Jewish people, and it is apparent that the Canaanite and Israelite peoples were infused with the Osiris myth, which thus affected their own religions, including the Judaic offshoot, Christianity. Like Jesus, Osiris was once believed to have incarnated as a human savior who died and was resurrected for the good of mankind:

Osiris has a human development. He is God in heaven and hell, but once appeared as man on earth.

He is one of the Saviours or Deliverers of Humanity, to be found in almost all lands. As such, he is born into the world. He came, as a benefactor, to relieve man of trouble, to supply his wants. In his efforts to do good, he encounters evil. He is killed. Osiris is buried. His tomb was the object of pilgrimage for thousands of years. But he did not rest in his grave. At the end of three days, or forty, he rose again, and ascended of heaven.

Diodorus Siculus

Diodorus Siculus's 'Antiquities of Egypt,' translated by Edwin Murphy In addition to the numerous Egyptian texts and the writings of Herodotus and Plutarch, one ancient source for information regarding Osiris and other Egyptian gods is Diodorus Siculus (c. 90-21 bce), a contemporary of Julius Caesar and a Greek citizen of Sicily. Less than half of the 40 books he wrote still exist, with the others either allowed to perish or deliberately destroyed in the centuries of book-burning and general vandalism and mayhem committed by the Catholic Church and others. In his book The Antiquities of Egypt, Siculus first declares that Osiris is the sun and Isis the moon:

"Now when the ancient Egyptians, awestruck and wondering, turned their eyes to the heavens, they concluded that two gods, the sun and the moon, were primeval and eternal; and they called the former Osiris, the latter Isis."

Siculus also relates, "Some of the early Greek mythologists call Osiris 'Dionysos,'" who, per the poet Eumolpos, shines like a star, "eyes aflame with rays." Thus, Osiris is not only the "Sun-God of Amenti, the region of the dead" but also "the Egyptian Bacchus" or Dionysus, the notorious Greek/Thracian god of the vine. Diodorus further states that, like Dionysus, Osiris is a "son of Zeus" who was raised at "Nysa, in Arabia Felix, not far from Egypt."

In telling the Osiris myth, Diodorus paradoxically lapses into the evemerist perspective that Osiris was a "real person" who walked the earth, did marvelous things, and then attained to immortality after death, again as was later said of Christ, Osiris's "Jewish" counterpart. As a mortal, Osiris "conquered" India, where he "founded many cities," including another Nysa, where he planted ivy. Osiris "left in that country many other indications of his presence, by which the latter-day Indians were persuaded to claim the god and assert that he was born in India." Rather than representing the travels of a "real man," the tale records the worship of Osiris making its way to India and elsewhere in a remote age.

Ancient Chaldean priests observing the skies

The spread of the Egyptian culture included a purported migration to Mesopotamia, with the Egyptian priesthood supposedly becoming the famous "Chaldeans." Diodorus Siculus relates the Egyptians as maintaining that "a large number" of their colonies went "into the civilized world," with "Belus" taking his colonists to Babylon, where he "appointed priests [Chaldeans] who were exempt from taxes and free of all civic obligations, just like those of Egypt." Another colony went with Danaus to Argos, "nearly the oldest city in Greece." Diodorus also writes that the Egyptians claimed the Athenians and the Colchians of Pontus as their own, and that "the Jews lying between Syria and Arabia, were also settled by certain expatriates from Egypt." This latter assertion explains why the male children of these ethnicities are circumcised, as circumcision is "age-old custom imported from Egypt."

Diodorus continues his travelogue, stating that Osiris "ranged over the entire inhabited world," bringing with him culture and the vine, as well as beer. Osiris then returned to Egypt, loaded with gifts from "every country," and was deified after his death. Diodorus also describes the origin of certain rituals, e.g., the focus on wine and not cutting one's hair practiced by a widespread brotherhood that in Palestine would become known as Nazarites or Nazarenes, major players in the creation of Christianity.

Solar Attributes

In spite of the rampant evemerism regarding the Osirian earth-wandering legend, Osiris is essentially the sun, regularly identified as such in the Egyptian Bible, the Book of the Dead. In addition to those numerous texts, the hymn to Osiris from the stela previously

cited continues thus:

O thou son of Nut, the whole world is gratified when thou ascendest thy father's throne like Ra. Thou shinest in the horizon, thou sendest forth thy light into the darkness, thou makest the darkness light with thy double plume, and thou floodest the world with light like the Disk at break of day.

Osiris as the Djed Pillar holding the Disc of the Sun God Ra, surrounded by Isis and Nephthys, Egyptian Book of the Dead, Ani Papyrus Osiris's solar nature is laid plain, by those who both worshipped and created him. Like that of other nations, including India, Egyptian mythology is complex, and Osiris also represents the light in the sun and moon. As Osiris took on the attributes of other gods, he eventually became the god of the afterlife, which is also a solar attribute. As Budge says, "The deceased is always identified with Osiris, or the sun which has set, the judge and god of the dead." Like the sun, the newly dead must pass through the Hall of Judgment (nighttime) before proceeding "to the east to begin a new existence."

In the same hymn above, Osiris's "sister" Isis is described in lunar terms, and Isis and Osiris's child, Horus, is said to have "waxed strong in the house of Seb." Seb is Osiris's earthly "father"; yet, it is clear that Horus—who is not only the son but also the father of Osiris, who is thus the "father and son of Horus"—is likewise a "son of Seb" in the same way that Jesus is the "son of David." Seb is also known as "Geb," and "Horus the Elder was believed to be the son of Geb and Nut." In addition, Seb is "Io-sef," or Joseph; hence, like Jesus, Horus is the "son of Joseph."

Osiris's "once-and-future son," Horus, represents the solar orb renewed at the winter solstice. On her temple at Sais, Horus's mother, Isis, is depicted as saying, "The fruit that I have brought forth is the Sun." The major solar roles include the sun as a child when rising and as an old man when setting. The sun is also a child at the winter solstice ("Christmas"), a youth at the vernal equinox or spring, a bearded man in his strength at the summer solstice, and an old man at the autumnal equinox. Concerning Horus, or the renewed solar incarnation, Olcott says:

In the Sun-God Horus we see the dawn personified, and the triumphant conqueror of the shades of darkness and the demons of the underworld emerges in the glorious light of victory each morning. He was figured as the eldest son of Osiris, a strong and vigorous youth, who avenged his father by waging a successful war against the monster who had swallowed him up.

Horus is depicted in the inscriptions as sailing forth from the underworld up the eastern sky at dawn, piercing the great python, born of night, as he advances.

Battling the Prince of Darkness

Egyptian god Set or Seth Like Jesus, Ra, Osiris and Horus all battle with Satan, i.e., Apep, Set or Typhon, as is typical of the God Sun, whose enemy is the "serpent" of night and darkness, the sun-devouring monster present in "nearly every mythology." In

the Egyptian mythology, as in the Christian, Apep/Set is "thrown from his high estate" to become a devil. In addition, one of the several appellations of Horus was "Jaoai, which is also "laoai," essentially the same as "lao," the Egyptian epithet adopted by Jews that became equated with "Yahweh." Also, one of Ra's daughters is named "Iousaas," which is intriguingly similar to "Joshua" and "Jesus" or Iasios, as was one form of the name in Greek.

The story of Osiris's death and resurrection has been the source of much discussion, especially since it is so similar to the Christian myth but pre-dates the latter by millennia. In the various Osirian legends, the "great python," Osiris's "brother and rival," Typhon or Set/Sata, swallows Osiris up, or in Plutarch's version, throws Osiris's body into the Nile. Osiris's renewed incarnation/son, Horus, kills Set or Sata, the night sky, darkness, desolation and fertility-destroying pestilence. The destruction of the god by the "Prince of darkness," represents the overthrow of the sun and its light reflected in the moon. The dismemberment of Osiris into 14 pieces represents the 14 days of the month when the moon is waning and the sun's light in it is "dying." Osiris's passion was said to take place on the 17th day of the month of Hathor, "when Osiris was in the twenty-eighth year either of his reign or of his age," the number 28 representing the days in the lunar month. Osiris's body parts were said to have been retrieved and buried in separate sacred sites by Isis. As is common in priestcraft, there were many tombs of Osiris in Egypt and Arabia, a development that reflects the mythical nature of Osiris, not that he was a "real person" interred in all these places.

The Passion of Osiris

The Passion and Resurrection of Osiris have been major mythical motifs that made their way into Christianity: "That the Passion as it was distinctly called and Resurrection of Osiris were yearly and openly celebrated by the worshippers of the Alexandrian gods with alternate demonstrations of grief and joy, the classical poets have put beyond doubt." The closeness to the much later Christ myth is unmistakable, as "Osiris was to his worshippers 'the god-man, the first of those who rose from the dead,' [whose] death and resurrection were therefore supposed to be in some way beneficial to mankind." Concerning this ancient, pre-Christian ritual, Budge relates:

...we find that the doctrine of eternal life and of the resurrection of a glorified or transformed body, based upon the ancient story of the resurrection of Osiris after a cruel death and horrible mutilation, inflicted by the powers of evil, was the same in all periods [of Egyptian history], and that the legends of the most ancient times were accepted without material alteration or addition in the texts of the later dynasties.

...everywhere, and in texts of all periods, the life, sufferings, death and resurrection of Osiris are accepted as facts universally admitted.

Horus raising Osiris from the Dead

Thus, the Passion and Resurrection of Christ are archetypal, not actual, representing a common religious and mythical motif, not the death and resurrection of a "real person." The archetypal death and resurrection of the god provide a spiritual example

for his followers: "Osiris was regarded as the principal cause of human resurrection, and he was capable of giving life after death because he had attained to it. He was entitled 'Eternity and Everlastingness,' and he it was who made men and women born again." This mystery of the resurrection is depicted in thousands of tombs in the Nile valley: "Osiris died and rose again from the dead, so all men hoped to arise like him from death to life eternal." These important religious and spiritual concepts were popular in Egypt "from very early times," long before the purported advent of Christ. Also, when the god was reborn, "a loud voice was heard throughout all the world saying, 'The lord of all earth is born!'" Indeed, "it is astonishing to find that, at least, five thousand years ago men trusted an Osiris as a risen Saviour, and confidently hoped to rise, as he arose, from the grave."

The Empty Tomb, Blood as Wine, Good Friday

In his mockery of Pagans, Christian writer Minucius Felix (3rd cent.) revealed that the Egyptians, and afterwards the Romans, beheld an empty tomb of Osiris or Serapis, another motif found in the later Christian myth. In addition to being placed in a tomb, Osiris was also covered in a shroud, relics of which were exhibited by unscrupulous priests long before the Christian era, a tradition continued with the two dozen or so bogus shrouds possessed by medieval churches including the infamous "Shroud of Turin" much ballyhooed to this day.

Another Egyptian tradition adopted by Christianity is the notion of the blood of the god being represented by wine, as described in a magic papyrus in the British Museum addressed to "Asklepios of Memphis." It is noteworthy that the heart of fine viniculture in Egypt was Mareotis, the Therapeutan cult center outside of Alexandria, the crucible of Christianity, which plagiarizes the water-to-wine motif and emphasizes Jesus's role as a winebibber.

As do Christians today, the millions of followers of Osiris were quite certain that, even though he was the Omnipotent Lord of Lord and King of Kings, he had at some point walked the earth. As Bonwick relates:

...he was a person who had lived and died. They had no manner of doubt about it. Did they not know his birthplace? Did they not celebrate his birth by the most elaborate ceremonies, with cradle, lights, etc.? Did they not hold his tomb at Abydos? Did they not annually celebrate at the Holy Sepulchre his resurrection? Did they not commemorate his death by the Eucharist, eating the Sacred Cake, after it had been consecrated by the priests, and become veritable flesh of his flesh?

Providing further evidence of Osiris's pre-Christian role as a dying and rising savior god, several early Church fathers, including Athanasius, Augustine, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Minucius Felix, Lactantius and Firmicus, discussed the Egyptian god's death as mourned "every good Friday."

Osiris surrounded by Twelve Stars and Circles (Hornung, 'The Valley of the Kings,' 94) The death and resurrection of the sun god have astrotheological meaning, signifying the waxing and waning of the moon, which reflects the sun's light, as well as the daily

rising and setting of the sun and the annual shortening and lengthening of the day. As part of his astrotheological journey, Osiris "traverses the twelve sections of the Duat," and, as the sun god, Osiris has twelve companions—the Signs of the Zodiac." Thus, in the myth of Osiris is the great teaching god with the twelve disciples who dies and resurrects, millennia before the Christian era. The evidence abundantly points to Jesus Christ as a nearly identical, mythical remake of the highly popular Osiris, whose story was known by millions of pilgrims for thousands of years in precisely the same areas in which the Christian myth arose.

For more information, including citations for the above excerpt, see *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled*. See also *Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection*.

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Jesus in India?

The Myth of the Lost Years

by Acharya S/D.M. Murdock

Indian image of Jesus Christ Over the centuries, the claim has repeatedly been made that Jesus Christ not only walked the earth but also spent his early and post-crucifixion years in a variety of places, including Egypt, India, Great Britain, Japan and America. Indeed, traditions maintain that Jesus, the great godman of the West, lived, learned, loved and died in such places. Popular modern literature also purports that Jesus sired children, who then became the ancestors of various royal families of Europe, including France and/or elsewhere, depending on the author.

The allegation of Christ being a kingly progenitor is extremely convenient and useful for European royal families, obviously. Unfortunately for the European claimants, however, India also has a tradition that Jesus went there and likewise fathered children. So too does Shingo, Japan, allege that Jesus ended up there after the crucifixion, having children with a Japanese wife. Other tales depict Jesus "walking the Americas" or bopping about Glastonbury, England, with his "uncle," Joseph of Arimathea. Not all of these tales can be true, obviously, unless Jesus is polymorphous and phantasmagoric, a perspective that in reality represents that of the mythologist or mythicist. To wit, regardless of these fables, or, rather, because of them, the most reasonable conclusion regarding Jesus and where he may or may not have been is that he is a mythical character, not a historical personage who trotted the globe.

The Groovy Guru

Jesus Christ in India image According to legend, Jesus, the great Jewish sage, spent his "lost years," from between the ages of around 12 to 28 or 30, in India, where, per another tradition, he also escaped after surviving the crucifixion. The Jesus-was-a-guru tale was popularized over a century ago by the Russian traveler Nicholas Notovitch. Notovitch asserted that in 1887, while at the secluded Hemis or Himis monastery in Ladakh/Tibet, he was shown a manuscript which discussed the "unknown life" of Jesus, or "Issa," as he was supposedly called in the East. This "Issa" text, translated for Notovitch from Tibetan by a monk/lama, alleged that during his "lost years" Jesus was educated by yogis in India, Nepal and "the Himalaya Mountains."

Stating that he felt the manuscript to be "true and genuine," Notovich maintained its contents were written "immediately after the Resurrection," while the manuscript itself purportedly dated from the third century of the Common Era. Notovich related that the "two manuscripts" he was shown at Himis were "compiled from diverse copies written in the Thibetan tongue, translated from rolls belonging to the Lassa library and brought from India, Nepal, and Maghada 200 years after Christ." (Notovich, 44)

Notovich's story was challenged by a number of people, which served to popularize it further. Noted Sanskrit scholar Max Müller came down hard on Notovich, concluding that either the Russian had never gone to Tibet in the first place, and had concocted the Jesus story, or that waggish Buddhist monks had played a trick on Notovich, as Indian priests had done in a notorious instance concerning the Asiatic Research Society's Colonel Wilford. Others subsequently journeyed to Himis/Hemis and witnessed repeated denial by the lamas that Notovich had ever been there or that any such manuscript existed. In 1922, Indian scholar and swami Abhenanda eventually determined for himself by visiting Himis, gaining the confidence of the lamas and having the manuscript revealed to him. Other visitors to Himis, such as mystic Nicholas Roerich, verified the same story. Aspects of Notovich's story checked out, and he apparently did indeed stay at Himis and was shown a manuscript relating to "Issa."

Nicholas Notovich Notovich claimed that Indian merchants brought the account of "Jesus" to Himis, and that they had actually witnessed the crucifixion. Indeed, the text begins with "This is what is related on this subject by the merchants who come from Israel," reflecting not that "Jesus" lived in India but that the Jesus tradition was brought to India and Tibet. (Notovich, 32) Notovich's text also did not state that Jesus was specifically at Himis: In fact, the lama stated that the Issa scrolls "were brought from India to Nepal, and from Nepal to Thibet." Yet, upon returning to Himis through later visitors, the story eventually became morphed into "Your Jesus was here," meaning at Himis itself. The "one book" or "two manuscripts" became "three books," which were displayed for the later visitors, with the implication that there was more to the tale.

Although subsequent visitors were presented such texts, none but Nicholas Roerich's son, George, could read them. By his translation, Roerich was evidently shown the same text as Notovich. Thus, it appears that there was only one text at Himis, and that it did not state that Issa himself was ever at the monastery. Furthermore, that one text is based on hearsay provided by passing merchants and does not at all represent an "eyewitness" account of "Jesus" in India and Tibet, although the impression is given that this and other texts do constitute such records.

Also, Notovich asked if "Issa" was reputed to be a saint, and was informed that "the people ignore his very existence" and that the lamas who have studied the scrolls "alone know of him." These remarks are a far cry from Roerich's claim that the tale of "Christ" in India and other parts of Asia was to be found widespread. They also contradict the Tibetan text's own assertion that Issa's "fame spread everywhere" and that Persia and surrounding countries "resounded with prophecies" of Issa, thus causing the Persian priesthood to be terrified of him. This latter element sounds like typical

mythmaking, especially since there were similar prophecies of godmen for centuries, if not millennia, prior to Christ's purported advent, particularly in India.

Moreover, the "originals" of the scrolls housed at the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, were composed in Pali, while the Himis library contained one copy in Tibetan. Yet, the Tibetan alphabet was developed by the king who "reigned in the days of Mohammed"; hence, nothing could have been written in Tibetan prior to the 7th century. Although older texts were composed in Sanskrit or Pali, it is clear that the actual physical manuscript revealed to Notovitch could not have existed before the 7th century. In fact, it would appear that very few Tibetan texts date to before the 9th century. In any event, the manuscript itself certainly did not date from the third century, although it could represent tradition transmitted over the centuries.

While Notovitch claimed the Issa story dated to shortly after "the Resurrection," in it there is no mention of the resurrection, and the tale ends with Issa's death. In this regard, the text depicts the "Jews," whom it calls "Israelites," in a favorable light, and is "the only [manuscript] ever to charge the Romans ["pagans"] solely for Jesus' execution." Unlike others, this account does not have Jesus being resuscitated and then returning to India, to father children and live a long life.

Notovitch's modern editor, Frank Muccie, relates that the manuscript states, "Pilate is responsible for removing Jesus' body from the tomb," noting that this development somehow does not "mean the resurrection hope is invalid." He then says:

"By the third century A.D., there were no fewer than 25 different versions of Jesus' death and resurrection! Some have him not being put to death at all, some have him revived back to life, and some have Jesus living on to old age and dying in Egypt!" (Notovitch, 6)

Obviously, not all of these 25 or more accounts can be "true and genuine," and such a development casts doubt on the historicity of one and all.

The Rozabal Tomb

Rozabal tomb Kashmir

Moreover, it is interesting that Notovitch spent six days in the "Vale of Kashmir," in its capital, Srinagar, "city of the sun," where the purported tomb of "Jesus," the wandering prophet Yuz Asaf, is shown to tourists. Yet, the Russian traveler apparently never heard of the tomb, known as the "Roza Bal" or "Rauzabal" shrine, as he does not mention it in his writings concerning the Tibetan text, where its inclusion certainly would have been judicious in demonstrating that Jesus lived in India! Perhaps, however, as a believing Christian Notovitch ignored this tale, much as the devout do today and much as skeptics may do with other fables concerning Christ.

Roza Bal footprints Possessing the priestly touch of sculpted footprints "with nail marks" over the grave, the Roza Bal shrine may seem convincing to the uninitiated, who are unaware of the world's well-developed priestcraft. This "artifact" is another in a long line of so-called relics, like the 20+ shrouds or the multiple foreskins of Christ. In reality,

there were many "footprints of the gods" in ancient times--and a number of Indian gods are depicted with nail holes in their feet.

Also, "Yuz Asaf" is not equivalent to "Jesus" but to "Joseph," which was often a title of a priest and not a name. In fact, Eastern scholars such as Dr. S. Radhakrishnan state that the name "Joseph" or "Joasaph" is "derived from Bodhisattva, the technical name for one destined to obtain the dignity of a Buddha." (Prajnanananda, 107) Thus, this tomb of a Bodhisattva could belong to any of thousands of such holy men. In like regard, the purported graves of "Jesus" and "his brother" in Japan are in reality those of a 16th-century Christian missionary and his brother.

The legends regarding Jesus's tomb in Srinagar, and that of the Virgin Mary in Kashgar, are apparently of Islamic origin, emanating largely from the "heretical" Ahmadiyya sect. Such a creation would serve a couple of purposes: 1. That, as asserted in the Koran, Jesus was not the "son of God" but a mortal prophet, whose body was buried in Kashmir; and 2. that some presumably Moslem people are his descendants.

Proponents of the Jesus-in-India theory hold up a number of other texts and artifacts they maintain "prove" not only Jesus's existence on Earth but also his presence in India. When such texts and artifacts are closely examined, they serve as no evidence at all, except of priestcraft. With one or two possible exceptions originating to a few centuries earlier, the Eastern texts regarding "Issa" seem to be late writings, some dating to the 15th and 18th centuries, based on traditions, not eyewitness accounts. Some of the "documents" are obviously fictitious, and others are downright ridiculous, such as the Bhavishya Mahapurana. A number of these texts merely relate the basic gospel story with embellishments depending on what the storyteller is attempting to accomplish. Buddhist Propaganda or Christian Proselytizing?

Tibetan Buddhist holding scrolls Although some of the writings appear to be of Hindu origin, the attack by "Issa" on the Vedas and Brahmans, as in the Notovitch text, represents Buddhist propaganda. It appears that Buddhists were trying to demonstrate that Jesus, the great wise man of the West, was influenced by Buddhism, even having been taught by "Buddha," an eternal disincarnate entity. In this regard, the Notovitch text states, "Six years later, Issa, whom the Buddha had chosen to spread his holy word, could perfectly explain the sacred rolls." (Notovitch, 35) In this way, Buddha usurps Jesus, becoming the Jewish teacher's guru.

That the text has been used as propaganda to raise Buddha and Buddhism over Christ and Christianity is further validated by Notovitch's foreword, in which he related that the lama told him, "The only error of the Christians is that after adopting the great doctrine of Buddha, they, at the very outset, completely separated themselves from him and created another Dalai-Lama..." This "Dalai-Lama," the monk subsequently informed the Russian, is the Pope. Concerning Christ, the lama continued, "Buddha did, indeed, incarnate himself with his intelligence in the sacred person of Issa, who, without the aid of fire and sword, went forth to propagate our great and true religion through the entire world." (Notovitch, 20) Hence, Eastern traditions regarding Jesus are designed to show that Jesus is Buddha and that Christianity is an offshoot of ancient Eastern wisdom.

Nevertheless, the Notovitch text itself may have been composed originally by proselytizing Christians who attempted to use the natives' belief in Buddha in order to increase Christ's stature. These missionaries may have been appealing to women to follow "Issa," as the text puts great emphasis on women, whose status in India and elsewhere has been abysmally low. The text would also appeal to the Sudras or Pariahs, since it has Issa preaching on their behalf. These groups are targeted to this day by Christian missionaries in India.

Considering that many missionaries, travelers and scholars have been keenly aware of the numerous and profound similarities between the Tibetan and Catholic religions, it would not be surprising if this Issa fable were created in order to show that the Tibetan religion is merely a foreign derivative of the "true universal religion," i.e., Catholicism. The resemblances between various Indian sects and Christianity likewise led to tales about the Christian missionaries Thomas, Bartholomew and Pantaenus also proselytizing in India. Like the Jesus-in-India myth, there are other explanations for the resemblances, which are addressed in detail in my book *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled*. In short, the major explanation is that the "Christian" religion and savior were already in India long before the alleged advent of Jesus. Is "Issa" Jesus - or Shiva?

By calling Issa "Jesus" or "Christ," modern writers have cemented in the readers' minds that the correlation is absolute, an erroneous conclusion. In reality, the name "Issa," "Isa" or "Isha" is a title and simply means "lord," "god" or "master," often referring to the Indian god Lord Shiva: "'Isha' or 'the Lord' is another name of Siva..." (Prajnanananda, 19) Furthermore, Prof. Nunos de Santos says, "...a god variously named Issa, Isha, Ichtos, Iesus, Ieshuah, Joshuah, Jesus, etc., is indisputably originally from India." He also states, "Ishvara (Ishwar) is widely worshipped in the Far East, being also called Isha (or Ishana) in India, Issara in Pali, Isuan in Thai, Jizu (or Jizai) in Japanese, and so on."

Chandra Hindu Moon God image "Isa" is likewise another name for Chandra, the Indian moon god, as well as for Shiva's Egyptian counterpart, the soli-lunar god Osiris, also called Iswara in India:

"Iswara, or Isa, and Isani, or Isisi, are...unquestionably the Osiris and Isis of Egypt. Iswara, Siva, or Hara (for these are his names among nearly a thousand more) united with Isi, represent the secondary causes, whatever they may be, of natural phenomena; and principally those of temporary destruction and regeneration." (Moor, 151)

Numerous ancient legends, recorded for example in the writings of Diodorus Siculus during the first century BCE, depict Osiris as traveling all over the East, as well as the rest of the world, during the millennia when he reigned as Egypt's favorite deity. Osiris, or Isa, it should be noted, was put to death and resurrected, among many other correspondences to the Christ myth. Osiris/Isa too had a number of tombs in various places, especially in Egypt but likely also in India. However, Osiris was not a "real person" but a fertility and sun god. What mythologists recognize is that it was not a

"historical Osiris" but his myth that made it to India and diverse places. As in the case of Osiris, the same phenomenon occurred regarding "Jesus," who is, in the end, a remake of Osiris, among others.

The title "Isa" or "Issa" could apply to others, and is a common name even today. Indeed, some part of these Jesus-in-India tales may revolve around the famed Greek sage Apollonius of Tyana. Not a few persons over the centuries have noted the similarities between the lives of Apollonius and Christ, and even in ancient times Christians were accused of plagiarizing the Apollonius legend.

The Nestorians

Nestorian Mongolian Bishop imageThe Issa myth apparently represents a Christianization of legends regarding Osiris, Shiva, Apollonius and other gods and "Bodhisattvas," by the Nestorians, an early Christian sect who lived in India and elsewhere, and may well have spread the syncretistic fable to other Asian ports of call. Indeed, Nicholas Roerich himself surmised that the ancient Nestorian sect spread the tales in the East:

"We heard several versions of this legend which has spread widely through Ladak, Sinkiang and Mongolia, but all versions agree on one point, that during His absence, Christ was in India and Asia.... Perhaps [this legend] is of Nestorian origin." (Prophet, 261)

Roerich also stated, "Whoever doubts too completely that such legends about the Christ life exist in Asia, probably does not realize what an immense influence the Nestorians have had in all parts of Asia and how many so-called Apocryphal legends they spread in the most ancient times." (Roerich, 89) In addition, George Roerich even proposed that there was a "floating colony" of Nestorians in Ladakh itself "during the eighth to tenth centuries," which could well be when the Notovitch text was composed. Roerich, one of the main writers whose works have led to the Jesus-in-India theory, almost invariably and misleadingly substitutes "Jesus" or "Christ" for "Issa," when Issa could be a number of individuals, mythical and historical.

In his account of Jesus in India, Roerich declared, "The teachings of India were famed far and wide; let us even recall the description of the life of Appolonius [sic] of Tyana and his visits to Hindu sages." (Roerich, 119) Again, one likely scenario regarding "Issa" ("Lord" or "Master") is that, whatever part of his tale is "historical," it possibly refers to Apollonius.

Pre-Christian Indo-European Interaction

As is well known, Apollonius was not alone in his journeys to the East. Decades and centuries prior to the Christian era, there was much intercourse between India and the West, including the famous journey by Pythagoras and the Alexandrian incursion. As another pertinent example, one of the seats of Mandeism, a Christian baptist sect, was Maisan, a Mesopotamian city colonized by Indians. As Dr. Rudolph Otto relates:

"...Indian caravans passed through Maisan and likewise Nabatea. Indian merchants,

wherever they went, were importers and missionaries of Indian ideas. There need be no surprise therefore if direct Indian imports are found in the syncretistic medley of Mandeian Gnosis". (Prajnanananda, 41)

Space does not permit us to recount the numerous authorities who are in agreement as to the westward spread of Indian and Buddhist concepts centuries before and into the Christian era. A number of them may be found in Prajnanananda's book, including a "Mr. Cust," who evinced that trade between India and Yemen "was established not later than 1000 B.C." Yemen is very close to Israel, and by the first century CE there were plenty of Indians in the Roman Empire.

Despite the popularity of the Jesus-in-India tale, the claim is not accepted by mainstream authorities, either Christian or secular. The tale's proponents assert that scholars reject Jesus in India because of Western imperialism and the inability to accept that Christ could have been influenced by Buddhism. In the case of mythicists, however, the reason Jesus is denied as having gone to India is because he is a pagan sun god remade into a Jewish "human" messiah. Thus, it is not a question of a "historical Jesus" being in India and the East but of a variety of solar cults that worshipped a similar deity with similar rituals, doctrines and myths.

The "Lost Years" Are Astrotheological

Jesus as the Sun throughout History Over the centuries Jesus's so-called "lost years" and post-crucifixion life have provided much fodder for the fertile human imagination, leading to speculation, legends, traditions and myths that the great godman and sage lived and studied in a variety of places. Once the fable of Christ became popular, numerous towns, villages, cities and nations wished to establish some sort of connection. Instead of recognizing that such a significant omission as Jesus's "lost years" is an indication of the mythical nature of the tale, individuals using typical priestcraft have come up with countless extraordinary adventures of the "historical Jesus." Unfortunately for the believers, however, not only is the gospel story itself but so too are these Jesus-the-Globetrotter tales mere deluding smoke and mirrors, and the reason for the gap in Jesus's biography is because he was not a "real person" but a pagan sun god turned into a Jewish messiah. In the mythos revolving around the sun god, there need be no accounting for "lost years," as the "age" of 12 represents the sun at high noon, while the 28 or 30 represents the days of the lunar or solar months, respectively.

When religions are investigated with a profound knowledge of mythology, the correspondences are clearly revealed, and it becomes evident that it is not the case that this miracleworker or that godman traveled to this place or that, as has been rumored to have occurred with just about every god or goddess. In actuality, it is the legends, traditions and myths concerning these gods, godmen or gurus that have been spread far and wide by their proponents, priests and propagandists. As was the case with the missionary and his brother in Japan, who were taken for the object of worship they were proselytizing, so has it developed in other parts of the world over the millennia concerning not only Jesus but also many other deities, such as the virgin-born, crucified Mexican god Quetzalcoatl, whose similar "life" and religion led to claims that "Jesus"

was in America. The reason for the similarities, however, is because both Jesus and Quetzalcoatl are sun gods with the same attendant holidays and practices.

In the final analysis, it is not possible that Jesus could have lived years after the crucifixion, fathered children and died in several different places, as legends represent. The past explanation for such discrepancies has been metaphysical, deeming Jesus to be multidimensional and capable of simultaneous incarnations in various locations. Such an explanation, of course, will not satisfy the skeptic and scientist. Or the mythologist, who simply knows better, because she or he has studied in depth the products of the human mind. Because the basic story of Christ revolves around the sun, which was highly esteemed the world over beginning many millennia ago, the myth is likewise found around the globe. To the basic mythos and ritual were added various embellishments according to the place and era, and for a variety of reasons. In the end, Jesus the Globetrotter is a not a historical personage who magically appeared all over the world, bi-locating and flying on the backs of birds. "Jesus Christ" is mythical creature, to be found globally only between the pages of a book.

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Jesus the Druid:

Was Christ in Great Britain?

by D.M. Murdock/Acharya S

Glastonbury Abbey imageAnother nation in which the native sun god was overthrown by the Jewish Son of God was Great Britain, where the ancient Druidism was likewise appropriated by the later Christianity. While the "Jesus in India" theory asserts the Jewish sage spent his entire early years there, the British tale of Jesus has him travel in his youth to Glastonbury in order to learn from the Druids.

The story goes that many of the tin miners in Britain at the time of Jesus's alleged advent were Jewish, which is sensible since British tin-mining was evidently highly valued by the Jews' Phoenician predecessors and cousins. One such miner was purportedly Jesus's "uncle" Joseph of Arimathea, who, along with Jesus, allegedly founded the first Christian church at Glastonbury. Certainly there were Jews in England at the time of Jesus's supposed existence, as there were diffused throughout much of

the world. However, the fact that Glastonbury was a "great Pagan sanctuary" in pre-Christian times makes this story suspicious as mythmaking and propaganda.

Among other things, Glastonbury was purportedly the seat of the "Holy Grail" or sacred chalice, a pre-Christian concept, and has been equated with the mythical pagan paradise Avalon. Legend holds that St. Patrick died in Glastonbury around 472 CE. However, since it appears that "St. Patrick" may be an ancient Irish god turned into a Christian saint, it would seem that this apocryphal story represents an approximation of when Christianity really began to circulate in England, "killing" the pagan gods.

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Adding to this notion, it was asserted that Mary's mother, Ann, lived in Glastonbury, and that Mary herself was buried there. After Christ's death, the story goes, Joseph was accompanied by Mary, the risen Lazarus and his sisters, Mary Magdalene and a number of other "saints." Unluckily for the Mary-in-Britain fable, other legends place her burial in Kashmir, as noted, and in Bethlehem, Ephesus and Gethsemane. Naturally, logic would dictate that, were Mary a real person, she would not be buried in more than one place. The reason why "Mary" appears all over is that she is the ubiquitous ancient Goddess turned into a Jewish maiden.

Concerning the British gods, Capt states that the Druidic trinity was composed of three "Beli" (cf. the Semitic Baal, Bal or Bel). Interestingly, "Yesu" (also "Hesus") was the name of the Druid "coming Saviour of the future." (Capt, 9, 10) Capt then naively remarks, "Druidism thus anticipated Christianity and pointed to the coming Saviour under the very name by which Christ was called." In reality, Christianity copied and incorporated countless elements of numerous religions within the Roman Empire and beyond. Moreover, per the Catholic missionary Huc, who traversed India, Tibet and other parts of Asia, "Yesu" was also a name of the expected avatar of the Hindu god Vishnu, of which Krishna was an avatar.

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the very heart of Druidism--the fabled Avalon itself--and who would know about the future Druid savior and other doctrines, would return from Palestine with tales that "the" Messiah by that very name had been born in Judea.

In addition, the first "church" at Glastonbury was supposedly "circular...with the twelve huts of the other disciples forming a circle around it." (Capt, 42) Many Pagan temples had a similar astrological blueprint, i.e., the circle of the Zodiac, and it is clear that Glastonbury's sanctuary was appropriated by the mythical Christ and fictive Twelve, as the original Druid "church" was likely founded in the name of their patron carpenter god, Yesu/Hesus, long prior to the alleged advent of the Jewish savior. Indeed, Christianity is but a Judaized rehash of Paganism, with the astrotheological pagan gods turned into the Jewish Son of God, his disciples and a slew of saints. Ergo the tales of Glastonbury and elsewhere.

The reason for all this apparent chicanery can be summed up by Capt's words: "There can be no doubt that the Glastonbury Abbey is the oldest, continuous Christian foundation in the world." As we have seen, and would continue to see in *The Christ Conspiracy*, *Suns of God* and other books, this claim of primacy is commonplace and has at its foundation not the "historical truth" but a powerful political and economic agenda. In actuality, scholars have repeatedly discredited these traditions regarding Jesus and Joseph in Glastonbury as having been devised in the 12th century by monks trying to entice pilgrims and their tourist money. (Capt, 107)

This myth was apparently created in order to establish the supremacy of the church at Glastonbury, as well as explain why Jesus and his purported teachings were so similar to the god(s) and doctrines of the Druids. The Druids in turn supposedly received their instruction from Pythagoras, who himself had traveled to India. Since the Druidic and Vedic priesthoods, language and culture are one at root, separating perhaps three millennia prior to the Christian era (Ellis), it does not surprise us that "Jesus" legends are found in both India and Britain. In fact, such a godman and doctrines already existed in Britain for centuries, if not millennia, prior to the Christian era. By having "Jesus" and/or Paul establish a church in what is "the center of the Druidic faith in Britain," the Jewish/Israelite version of the tale thus usurped the native religion. Also, Druidism was a thorn in the side of the Romans, who could not totally rule Britain so long as it existed; hence, it would benefit the eventual Roman Church to have their supposed founder personally consecrate Britain.

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Apollonius, Jesus and Paul:
Men or Myths?
by Acharya S/D.M. Murdock

Over the centuries, not a few people have noticed a resemblance between the lives of the ancient sage Apollonius of Tyana and the Christian savior Jesus Christ, a comparison most notably brought to light by the "very important Roman official" Sossianus Hierocles in the fourth century. Apollonius was said to have lived in the first century, precisely at the time of Jesus's advent, although the former supposedly lived to be around 100 years old, while the latter allegedly died several decades earlier.

It is claimed that hundreds of statues of Apollonius were erected during the first centuries of the Christian era, with his fame as a "divine man" widespread around the Mediterranean. Numerous events in Apollonius's life, as provided to us principally from a biography created around 210 by Philostratus, commissioned by the empress Julia Domna, peculiarly parallel those of Christ. It is difficult to determine what, if any, of Philostratus's Life of Apollonius constitutes history, although there appears to be confirmation at least of Apollonius's existence. In fact, from the odd coincidences between his life and that of Jesus, it has been suggested by not a few people that Jesus Christ is a fictional character based in large part on Apollonius of Tyana, although Christians beginning in early times cast the accusation of plagiarism in the opposite direction.

In addition to this possible development are striking correlations between the lives of Apollonius and the apostle Paul, who, like Jesus, strangely finds no place in contemporary history, despite claims to his having made quite a ruckus in a populated and well documented part of the world. It appears that the stories of both Jesus and Paul were in part fabricated from that of Apollonius. The opposite is also possible, although, in this author's studied opinion, unlikely. It also may be that both Apollonius and Jesus were historical figures who did and said everything they are reported to have done and said, in which case we would be dishonest in accepting one without the other, both representing "God on Earth."

The following table outlines germane events and characteristics in the lives of the three men, as recorded in various sources, particularly the Life of Apollonius and the Bible. It should be noted that just as the Bible does not acknowledge "Apollonius of Tyana," nor does Apollonius's biography mention Christ, Paul, Christians or Christianity. (The events herein are not necessarily in chronological order; nor is the list complete. A fuller treatment of this important subject would require an entire volume.)

Apollonius

Apollonius of Tyana

Jesus

Jesus Christ

Paul

Apostle Paul

Born 4 BCE Born 4 BCE Born c. 2 CE?

Birth miraculously announced by a supernatural being	Birth miraculously announced by a supernatural being
Was the son of a god and a mortal woman	Was the son of a god and a mortal woman.
Raised in Tarsus	Raised in Tarsus
Religiously precocious as a child	Religiously precocious as a child
Asserted to be a native speaker of Aramaic	Asserted to be a native speaker of Aramaic
Claimed to be a speaker of Hebrew	
Associated with wise men or magi	Associated with wise men or magi
Had a disciple named Damis from Asia Minor	Had a disciple named Thomas; blessed a robber on the cross named Demas
Had an associate named Titus	Had an associate named Titus
Associated with a Demetrius	Associated with a Demetrius
Associated with a Stephanus	Associated with a Stephanus
Influenced by Plato	Reflected Platonism
Renounced wealth	Embraced poverty
Followed abstinence and asceticism	Followed abstinence and asceticism
Followed abstinence and asceticism	
Wore long hair and robes	Wore long hair and robes
Discussed eunuchs for the kingdom of Babylon	Discussed eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven
Was unmarried and childless	Was unmarried and childless
Was anointed with oil	Was anointed with oil
Went to Jerusalem	Went to Jerusalem
Spent much time at Antioch	Spent much time at Antioch
Made missionary journeys around Mediterranean	Made missionary journeys around Mediterranean
Traveled to the East for three years, where he was taught by sages	Traveled to the East for three years, where he was taught by Jesus
Wrote epistles instructing followers in spirituality	Wrote epistles instructing followers in spirituality
Spoke in metaphors	Spoke in parables
Fought wild beasts at Ephesus	Fought "wild beasts" at Ephesus
Saw and predicted the future	Saw and predicted the future
Performed miracles	Performed miracles
Healed the sick	Healed the sick
Cast out evil spirits	Drove out demons
Raised the daughter of a Roman official from the dead	Raised the daughter of a Jewish official from the dead
Famed far and wide	Famed far and wide
Well known in Christian communities around the Mediterranean	
Religious reformer	Religious reformer
Spoke authoritatively to temple priests	Spoke authoritatively to temple priests
Spoke as a "law-giver"	Spoke as a "law-giver"

Founded a religious community at Corinth
at Corinth

Founded a religious community

Was on a mission to bring Greek culture to the "barbarians" Was on a mission to bring Jewish culture to the "nations"

Converted "unrefined" people to himself Converted "unsaved" people to himself

Believed to be a "savior" from heaven Believed to be a "savior" from heaven

Worshipped as a god Worshipped as a god Mistaken for a god

Accused of being a magician Accused of being a magician

Had his life threatened Had his life threatened Had his life threatened

Brought before a king, whose righteousness he challenged Brought before a king, whose righteousness he challenged

Was accused of killing a boy Was accused of killing a boy (Infancy Gospel of Thomas)

Condemned by Roman emperor Condemned by Roman authorities Condemned by Roman emperor

Imprisoned at Rome Imprisoned at Jerusalem Imprisoned at Jerusalem and Rome

Miraculously escaped prison Miraculously escaped prison

Was shipwrecked Was shipwrecked

Descended into the underworld Descended into the underworld

Was assumed into heaven Ascended into heaven

Appeared posthumously to a detractor as a brilliant light Appeared posthumously to a detractor as a brilliant light

Said to be in two places at once Said to be in many places at once

Had his image revered in temples Had his image revered in churches

As can be seen, there are many important details that correspond between the lives of all three men. In some ways, of course, one or the other of the godmen was superior in his capacities, such as the claim about Apollonius being able to speak and understand "all languages" without having studied or learned them.

In an interesting development, Apollonius and Paul's journeys took a very similar route, though generally in reverse of each other. In fact, it has been calculated that Paul and Apollonius were at both Ephesus and Rome at precisely the same time. It would be very odd if two such similar and powerful men, preaching to religious communities in these places, were unknown to each other. Unless, of course, they were each other. Oddly enough, the book of Acts mentions an "Apollos" at Ephesus with Paul, the name "Apollos" being an abbreviation of "Apollonius." In any event, encompassing various brotherhood and mystery school sites, the route taken by both Apollonius and Paul was also more or less that of Orpheus, a mythical proselytizer of the religion of Dionysus, whose epithet was said to have been IES, centuries before the Christian era. Many others doubtlessly also made this pilgrimage to these pre-Christian sacred sites and mystery schools over the centuries.

Paul's Journeys

Paul's Journeys

Apollonius's Journeys

Apollonius's Journeys

Not only are the journeys of Paul and Apollonius very similar, their names are as well. While Paul is "Paulos" in Greek, Thayer's Lexicon states that "Apollon" is, according to some ancient authorities, contracted from "Apollonios." Interestingly, "Apollon" is mentioned in five places in Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, in such a way - juxtapositioned with the names of Paul, "Cephas" and Christ; Paul and Christ; or Paul alone - as to attribute great significance to him. It has further been asserted that this contraction of the name Apollonius, Apollon, was found uncontracted in the Codex Bezae of the New Testament.

Moreover, the name "Apollonius," it has been evinced, was also abbreviated in ancient times as "Pol," but this writer has not been able to confirm that claim. It has further been asserted that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was not "Paulos" but "Apollon," an interesting claim in consideration of the fact that Hebrews is written in "Hebraistic Greek" and that Apollonius was said to be a native speaker of the Hebraistic language of Aramaic. Oddly, Hebrews was one of the three epistles that were missing in the first New Testament compiled by Marcion. Furthermore, there are various "Pauline" writings that appeared after the alleged death of Paul, during the period when Apollonius was said to be still alive.

If the story of Apollonius was as well known in more or less detail as presented by Philostratus in the century proceeding that writer, i.e., the second century, with aristocracy admiring Apollonius to the point of worship, the gospel tale must be regarded as an obvious attempt at competition. In this scenario, fervent monotheists who believed it was their destiny to achieve religious hegemony set about to outdo the Capadoccian sage and, via their own usurping godman, prove themselves the spiritual leaders of mankind.

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Bone-Box No Proof of Jesus
by Acharya S/D.M. Murdock

(NB: This article was published in a three-part series in the magazine Secular Nation, at

the suggestion of Dr. Robert Price, who called the series "fine articles." Secular Nation had never published a three-part article before.)

James Ossuray Bone Box Brother of Jesus In the week of October 21, 2002, headlines around the world screamed that evidence of Jesus Christ had been found in the form of an ossuary, or bone-box, supposedly once containing the bones of "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus," as was inscribed on the box in Aramaic. The original scholar who reported this spectacular find, the Sorbonne's biblical expert Andre Lemaire, "born a Catholic," concluded it was "very probable" that the inscription referred to Jesus of Nazareth, i.e., Jesus Christ. The ossuary, therefore, would supposedly be that of the biblical "James the Just," who is referred to as Jesus's "brother" at Matthew 13:55 and Galatians 1:19. Naturally, Christian apologists and fanatics rubbed their hands together, and gleefully and smugly bombarded nonbelievers with the news via email. But was there really some wondrous "new proof" of Jesus that would set the record straight once and for all, or was it all another bit of faithful flotsam?

In actuality, it seems to be time once again for the world's religious handlers to pull out another holy relic in order to bolster up the flagging faith. Such shenanigans have been behind the incessant news releases regarding the Shroud of Turin (a more bogus relic there never was), the recent "depiction" of what Jesus would have looked like (a Neanderthal), and the never-ending slew of books concerning the "real Jesus," who invariably resembles the authors of said books. To those who have been around a while and have developed a jaundiced eye, this latest "find" is yet more of the same "evidence."

The original Biblical Archaeology Review article that scooped this story was blatant and injudicious in its pronouncements, flatly stating that "This container [ossuary] provides the only New Testament-era mention of the central figure of Christianity and is the first-ever archaeological discovery to corroborate Biblical references to Jesus."

Hillary Mayell, writing for the National Geographic (10/21/02), said, "Researchers may have uncovered the first archaeological evidence that refers to Jesus as an actual person and identifies James, the first leader of the Christian church, as his brother."

The article on MSNBC's website regarding the ossuary stated, "No physical artifact from the first century related to him has been discovered and verified."

CNN's Jeordan Legon, in an article entitled, "Scholars: Oldest Evidence of Jesus?" writes, "While most scholars agree that Jesus existed, no physical evidence from the first century has ever been conclusively tied with his life."

Newsweek's Kenneth Woodward opens his article, "A Clue to Jesus?" (11/4/02) by stating:

"Although Jesus of Nazareth is a universally recognized figure, no one has ever found any evidence for his existence apart from texts."

Rossella Lorenzi's article in Discovery News is entitled "First Proof of Jesus Found?" This title allows for a couple of interpretations, including that the bone box is the earliest evidence yet discovered. However, in the initial sentence Lorenzi says, "The first archaeological evidence of Jesus' existence has come to light..." and she repeats that "the new find would be the first archaeological discovery to corroborate Biblical references to Jesus," indicating the proper interpretation of the headline to be that there was no prior evidence.

Moreover, Dan Rahimi, the "director of collections" for the museum where it is being housed, stated, "A lot of people accept the reality of Jesus as a historical figure but don't accept him as Christ, and to use the words 'before Christ' is really quite ethnocentric of European Christians..." The article reporting this comment also relates, "Even the date of Jesus' own birth has been disputed for centuries, with many scholars asserting it took place between 4 and 7 B.C., in the autumn months."

On their face value, such headlines and comments imply that there has never been any other proof of Jesus ever found. Such an assertion is quite astounding, considering that Jesus Christ was supposedly a man who shook up the world and purportedly has been supernaturally in charge of the cosmos for the past 2,000 years! What these remarks regarding the "only New Testament-era mention," "first-ever archaeological discovery," "first archaeological evidence," "oldest evidence," and "first proof" reflect is that there has previously been no direct evidence that Jesus Christ ever existed. Moreover, the comment that "a lot of people accept the reality of Jesus as a historical figure" implies that many people recognize this dearth of evidence and do not accept him as "historical figure." In addition, the admission that Jesus's birth date is basically unknown further undermines his "historical reality."

Ossuaries Not Uncommon

Sending thrills through the Christian community, Lemaire dated the ossuary and inscription to 63 CE, which places it squarely in the time of active Christian church-building. Although the faithful believe that this astonishing pronouncement was rooted in science, Lemaire's precise dating is based on the a priori assumption that the find is indeed the bone-box of James the Just, the disciple whose death is assigned by Christians to the year 62 CE. Nevertheless, it is not the case that the ossuary contains an inscribed date or is conclusively dated by other means to exactly 63 CE and must therefore represent the burial box of James the Just. In other words, the dating is based on circular reasoning: Since James died in 62 CE, and since this is apparently his ossuary, it must date to 63 CE, when his bones would have been placed in it. There is no proof, however, that James died in that year or that this is his ossuary. Yet, triumphant apologists will falsely claim that this ossuary has conclusively been proved to be that of James and to date to exactly the right time! As is well known to those who have scientifically investigated so many previous Christian claims, apologists constantly use this type of flawed logic. To repeat, even though news reports make it seem the box itself contains this very date, in reality the dating of 63 CE attached to this particular ossuary is based on the tradition of James's death, not because the box possesses a dated inscription or there is some other precise dating method.

According to CNN, the "Israeli government's geological survey test" concluded that "the object is more than 19 centuries old," but the author cites BAR as the source, and this particular statement does not appear on the BAR website article. Jewsweek.com's Debra Berman reports, "The Geological Survey of Israel conducted electron-microscope tests on the box that proved the inscription was not added at a later date; no traces of modern elements were found." Apparently, however, this claim is erroneous, as another Jewsweek writer, Rochelle Altman, debunks the last part of the inscription. Hence, such "scientific" tests are questionable; even if the entire inscription were genuine, electron-microscope dating could not pinpoint the exact year. Even carbon-dating, which is used to date organic remains, not stone, has an error factor of + or -150 years. Hence, this limestone box, which is nevertheless apparently fairly old, based on the fact that it cracked severely during transport, could date from another century altogether, particularly the two to three following Jesus's purported advent. Supposedly also the box was heavily damaged specifically by a crack in the inscription. The ossuary's handlers have been surprisingly careless, especially considering how priceless would be this artifact, were it and/or its inscription genuine.

In "First Proof of Jesus Found?," Lorenzi uses another tactic that is convincing at first glance: She states that during the first century these ossuaries were used in "the second of a two-stage burial process, when bones of the deceased were transferred from burial caves." By saying "In the first century," the writer is implying that such a use is unique to that century, thus giving the find even more credibility as deriving from the correct era.

Although these enthusiastic newsbites make it seem otherwise, the James ossuary is not unusual, nor is it necessarily dated to the convenient year of 63 CE. In giving his contrived date a professional flourish, Lemaire also claimed the box must date from the first century because it fits in with when "Jews" used ossuaries, between 20 BCE and 70 CE. While it may be argued that "Jews," i.e., members of the tribe of Judah and territory of Judea, used ossuaries "only" between those dates, it is quite clear that their predecessors, Canaanites, Israelites and Hebrews, utilized them for centuries prior to that. The site of Hederah in northern Israel, for example, yielded numerous fragments and complete ossuaries, some of which were in the exact square shape as that of James's. There were other shapes as well, including one that resembled a house, with a peaked roof. These finds were dated by their discoverer, E.L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University, to the fourth millennium BCE. (Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, II, 496.) Sukenik concluded that these house-shaped vessels were akin to the "soul-houses" of the Egyptians and "house urns" of the Europeans. Finds at other sites that confirm these dates include those at Azor, Bene-Berek and Tel Aviv. (EAEHL, II, 496.) As we can see, this type of vessel is not uncommon and does not necessarily date to the first centuries BCE-CE.

In actuality, the use of ossuaries even in the Palestine/Judea area dates back to at least the Second Temple Period and continued for several centuries into the Common Era. In other words, even "Jews" used ossuaries well beyond the fall of the Temple, i.e., 70 CE. Based on findings from the Jerusalem necropolis of the Second Temple Period (6th cent. BCE-70 CE), the editor of the Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the

Holy Land, Michael Avi-Yonah, says, "The custom of re-internment of the bones (in ossuaries) was widespread among Jews at the end of the Second Temple Period and for several centuries afterwards. Numerous laws in the Mishnah and Talmud deal with the modes of burial and the form and size of tombs." (Emphasis added.) These burials refer specifically to ossuaries, which were used once the flesh had decayed, leaving the bones alone. (EAEHL, II, 628.) Obviously, the ossuary-burial did not end in 70 CE, so Lemaire's terminus a quem is erroneous, as is his terminus a quo. Hence, this ossuary and its inscription could date from any of several centuries, including the Constantinian era, when bogus relics and forged texts were all the rage. As can be seen, ossuaries in Jerusalem were fairly common as well, so that, if the James ossuary is bogus, its creator would have plenty of examples upon which to draw.

Furthermore, as Avi-Yonah states regarding the numerous bone-boxes found in the Tombs at Dominus Flevit, which contained "122 ossuaries of the usual type [square]," common names included Jeshua or Yeshua (Jesus) and Maria (Mary). (EAEHL, II, 636.) In one of the surviving family tombs in Jerusalem are 18 ossuaries with Greek inscriptions, one of which contains the names "Joseph" (twice) and "Maria." (EAEHL, II, 635.) By the typical media and religious standards this tomb should have been exalted as that of Jesus's family.

In another example, in the "Tomb Cave in the Talpiot Quarter, discovered in 1945," are found large charcoal crosses on one of the ossuaries, while "two other ossuaries had Greek inscriptions reading IhsouV iou. IhsouV alwq," a phrase that contains the name Jesus twice. "The excavator interpreted the crosses and the inscriptions as expressions of sorrow at the crucifixion of Jesus, an interpretation not accepted by other scholars." The tomb itself dates to the beginning of the first century and demonstrates the commonality of the name Jesus before the purported time of the Christian messiah. (EAEHL, II, 635.) If this Jesus tomb had dated to a few decades later, no doubt the media and faithful would have had a field day in presenting it as the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth, thus "proving" the biblical fable, although these two tombs mentioned herein would certainly infuriate the keepers and believers in the "Holy Sepulchre," yet another profitable tourist attraction. It would be surprising that no such incautious and mirthful rush to judgment has occurred concerning this particular Jesus tomb. In reality, at least one sloppy sensationalist author has claimed this tomb to be that of "Jesus of Nazareth," asserting that the tomb also contained the ossuaries of not only a Jesus, but also a Joseph, two Marys and a Jude. The excavation report, however, does not mention these other burials, leaving the question as to whether or not this particular author is prone to fiction, as is suggested by his other writings as well. As is evident, looks can be deceiving, such that caution should be utilized in regard to artifacts.

In Jerusalem there is even a "Tomb of Jason," complete with an ossuary and a scratched image of a warship, which could lead to the conclusion that this is the tomb of the Jason of Greek mythology. "On the walls of the porch are charcoal drawings of ships, a Greek inscription, and several Aramaic inscriptions, the longest of which consists of three lines lamenting Jason, the deceased." (EAEHL, II, 630) Using coins and pottery, the tomb is dated to having been used between the Hasmonean (2nd-1st cent. BCE) and the Herodian eras (37 BCE-70 CE). Although it is evidently the tomb of

a real person of that era, true believers in the demigod Jason of Argonaut fame could attempt in the same manner as Christians to "prove" the existence of Jason and his Argonauts, such as Hercules, as "real people."

The name or epithet "Jason," meaning "healer" was commonly utilized in describing "Pagan" gods such as Asklepios, whose cult extended far and wide in the ancient Mediterranean world. As stated by Bronsen Wickkiser, fellow of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Asklepios was "known as a healer since Homer," and his cult spread rapidly at the "beginning of the late fifth century B.C." "So popular was he," says Wickkiser, "that his sanctuaries spanned the ancient world, from Hispania in the west to Ecbatana in the east." Hence, we have for several centuries prior to the Christian era a healing god--called "Iasios," "Iesios," i.e., Jason or Jesus--whose sanctuaries were widespread around the Mediterranean. A healer associated with these gods might be called a "brother of Jason" or a "brother of Jesus," long before the Christian era. Indeed, all roads point to Christianity as an expose of the secret Pagan rituals that concerned a healing god with long curly hair who rose from the dead, etc. This particular designation of the "brother of Jesus" has been one of four that have been bandied about since early times. The news reports regarding the James ossuary mention only three: 1. James was Jesus's blood brother, born of the Virgin Mary; 2. James was one of Joseph's children by another marriage; or 3. James was Jesus's "cousin." These reports ignore what is likely the most appropriate, i.e., that "James" was a member of a brotherhood such as the Nazarites or Nazarenes.

As Frank Zindler points out, the "brother of Yeshua" (Joshua/Jesus) could also be translated "the brother of the Savior," which would indicate a title of someone involved in a specific society or cult, rather than a familial bloodline. The fact that James is cited in this inscription as the "son of Joseph, brother of Jesus" creates suspicion since it is by no means agreed within all the Christian sects that Jesus had any blood brothers, despite the assertions in the New Testament. The wording on the James ossuary, if it is to be interpreted as referring to a blood brother born of Mary, would indicate that of the many sects one particular was involved in its apparent forgery. A Protestant minister at the Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, Ben Witherington III, argues that the phrase "brother of Jesus" refers to a blood brother, giving etymological reasons for his assumption. However, in an article from Believenet.net and reproduced by ABCNEWS.com, Witherington ironically uses a passage from Acts 15:13-21, in which James is made to address a group of men using the word "Brethren." The word in the original Greek for "brethren," i.e., brothers, is adelphoi, which is the plural of the word, adelphos, used to describe James at Galatians 1 and elsewhere. Witherington argues that this word adelphos, as in Philadelphia, "City of Brotherly Love," probably refers to blood brothers. Yet, in the passage at Acts, James is clearly not referring to blood brothers but to "brothers" in the sense of the word as used by the clergy and members of other brotherhoods and fraternities into modern times. The proper usage concerning James is in reality the fourth interpretation, which is that to be called a "brother" means you are a member of a male-based society, church, organization, secret or otherwise. In another instance, Witherington points out the phrase in 1 Cor. 15:3-9, which discusses "500 brethren." Now, if that refers to Jesus's blood family, he certainly had many brothers! It is quite clear that the phrase "500 brothers" refers to members of the

community, not a family, so why has this meaning been ignored constantly over the centuries? Matthew 13:55-56 also mentions Jesus's "sisters," but this phrase too is usually ignored. As we know, such Christian communities as the Quakers refer to their female members as "sisters," while their male members are "brothers."

Unbeknownst to the masses, tombs of gods are common around the world and are part of well-established priestcraft. The mention of a character on such a tomb or ossuary does not prove that the person really existed. No doubt many Indians, for example, have recorded the names of their various gods on their own epitaphs--by this "logic," all these gods would have to have existed as "historical characters." Certainly in ancient Egypt Osiris and Isis were included in all solemn events, especially burials, and Osiris's numerous tombs may be found all over Egypt--they therefore must have been real people!

Aramaic for an Orthodox Jew?

A scan of the ossuaries dating from the Herodian period reveals that many, if not most, were inscribed in Hebrew and Greek, not Aramaic. It would seem unusual for an orthodox Jew such as James, as he has been shown to have been by Robert Eisenman, et al., to have his epitaph written in Aramaic, which is Syriac, the language of the northern kingdom, as opposed to Hebrew, which was that of Judea and of "true" Jews. Educated Jews may have settled on Greek, but possibly not Aramaic. The Aramaic inscriptions on the "Jewish" ossuaries seem to be mainly warnings, advising "Do not open it." It is possible that inscriptions written in Aramaic were designed for the common people, the speakers of the vulgar lingua franca, rather than for the elite, for whom the Greek and Hebrew inscriptions were written. Having this identification written in Aramaic might also be a bit suspicious, even though there were some ossuaries in family tombs with Aramaic writing. Yet, again, for an orthodox Jew? It is possible that a forger supposed, as have millions of Christians, that historical Jesus spoke Aramaic, as would his purported sibling, James; therefore, in order for the inscription to appear "authentic," according to Christian tradition, it should be written in Aramaic.

James Ossuary Bone Box writing BAR reports that, according to Lemaire, the cursive style of Aramaic in which the inscription appears occurred only from 10-70 CE. Lorenzi also writes that the inscription's cursive Aramaic "would date the ossuary to the last decades of 70 A.D." This latter statement is meaningless, as it is undoubtedly a typo. In any case, it should be noted that epigraphy is an inexact science and that clever forgers have been able to replicate just about any style imaginable. That the style "fits perfectly" with the writing of the era, as stated by Lemaire and Catholic University's Joseph Fitzmyer, proves little, since, again, forgers are often well skilled in reproducing styles. In the end, Fitzmyer honestly concluded that nobody can show that the box's "Jesus" is really Jesus of Nazareth.

The study of such ossuaries reveals that, as is claimed by Lemaire, et al., it is true that the inscriptions usually ran something like: "Judah son of Johanan, son of Jethra," rather than including a brother's name. This fact concerning the James ossuary would actually cast doubt as to its genuineness; indeed, it seems contrived in order to prove a point, i.e., the existence of Jesus. Indeed, in an article "Ossuary was genuine,

inscription was faked," for Jewsworld magazine, "expert on scripts and historian of writing systems" Rochelle I. Altman has pronounced the ossuary genuine, as well as the first part of the inscription. However, the last part, "brother of Jesus" is unquestionably a sloppy fake. Says she:

The bone-box is original; the first inscription, which is in Aramaic, "Jacob son of Joseph," is authentic. The second half of the inscription, "brother of Jesus," is a poorly executed fake and a later addition. This report has already been distributed on at least two scholarly lists.

Altman also notes that the phrase is certainly not written in Aramaic and "You have to be blind as a bat not to see that the second part is a fraud." Altman is no naysaying slouch: She has "a great deal of experience at spotting ancient frauds and forgeries." As such an expert, Altman was able to determine that the James ossuary inscription was clearly written by two different people. The inscriber of the first part was a member of the family and "fully literate," says she, while the "person who wrote the second part...may have been literate, but it is doubtful that he was literate in Aramaic or Hebrew." Also, Altman points out that the original excised frame around the first part of the inscription had to be removed to fit the last, faked part, i.e., "brother of Jesus." Even to the untrained eye, it is obvious that the latter part of the inscription, i.e., "Brother of Jesus," was written by a different, less skillful hand than the first part.

According to the Ottawa Citizen, another expert, Eric Meyers, professor of Judaic studies at Duke University, also has a "bad feeling" that the inscription is a forgery, noting that its owner is being investigated by authorities for theft of "an object now worth between \$1-million and \$2-million dollars if its authenticity holds up under scrutiny." Meyers relates Altman's conclusion that "the brother of Jesus" part of the inscription is in a different hand from the rest and dates to centuries later. Obviously, such a potential payoff would provide--and has provided--motive for fraud.

The James ossuary is suspicious not only for the lack of its provenance, a development frequently indicating a forgery, but also for the tidiness of its inscription, which seems to have been written not by an early "innocent" Christian but by a propagandist such as those who created so many bogus relics over the centuries. Unfortunately, the news reports, which include conclusions that the ossuary is "genuine," never mention the countless forgeries and fraudulent Christian artifacts of centuries past, a fact that would surely provoke caution in more prudent observers.

Too Many Jesuses

Although the reports claimed that the odds of the combination of the three names James, Joseph and Jesus appearing together on an ossuary are "very slim," even Lemaire admits that there could have been about "20 Jameses in Jerusalem during that era [who] would have had a father named Joseph and a brother named Jesus." (MSNBC) Zindler also remarks that there were many individuals in Judea and Palestine by the names of James, Joseph and Jesus, such that, even if "the brother of Jesus" part of the inscription were genuine, the odds of having these particular relationships are far greater than what has been designated by believing scholars such as Lemaire. Indeed,

we have already seen examples of such names on various tombs and ossuaries from the "Holy Land."

The believing argument runs that, because it is unusual to include the name of a brother in one's epitaph, this brother must have been a "well-known figure." There are, in fact, "too many Jesuses" of renown, as Harold Leidner shows in his book *The Fabrication of the Christ Myth*. These Jesuses, as found in the works of the Jewish historian Josephus and in biblical texts, include the following (list quoted from Leidner, 19-20):

- Jesus son of Naue
- Jesus son of Saul
- Jesus, high priest, son of Phineas
- Jesus son of the high priest Jozadak
- Jesus son of Joiada
- Jesus, high priest, son of Simon
- Jesus, high priest, son of Phabes
- Jesus, high priest, son of See
- Jesus the Christ
- Jesus son of Damnaeus, became high priest
- Jesus son of Gamaliel, became high priest
- Jesus son of Sapphas
- Jesus, chief priest, probably to be identified with 10 or 11
- Jesus son of Gamalas, high priest
- Jesus, brigand chief on borderland of Ptolemais
- Jesus son of Sapphias
- Jesus brother of Chares
- Jesus a Galilean, perhaps to be identified with 15
- Jesus in ambushade, perhaps to be identified with 16
- Jesus, priest, son of Thebuthi
- Jesus, son of Ananias, rude peasant, prophesies the fall of Jerusalem.

Among these many Jesuses is Jesus, son of Naue, also known as Joshua, son of Nun, the Old Testament messianic figure who supposedly led the Israelites into the Promised Land after Moses failed to do so. It has been demonstrated over the past couple of centuries, and confirmed by the Dead Sea Scrolls, that there was a sort of "Joshua" cult long before the Christian era, revolving around this important Israelite "hero." Apparently, however, "Joshua" or Yeshua ("Savior") was an ancient Canaanite god usurped by the followers of the volcano god Yahweh. In any case, Joshua's position in the Old Testament is one of high estimation: He is the heir to Moses as God's spokesman and will on earth. Joshua is essentially the messiah, and it would seem that members of the northern kingdom, such as those Israelites who eventually became called "Samaritans," virtually worshipped him. Interestingly, the name Joshua or Yeshua is rendered in the the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint, as JESUS. Hence, a reader of that all-important text would see the name Jesus a couple of hundred times for centuries prior to the Christian era. To repeat, while the articles regarding the James ossuary state that there are only three lines of thought concerning the phrase "brother of Jesus," i.e., James was a blood brother, a stepbrother or a cousin, a more likely

explanation is that he was a member of a secret Joshua/Jesus society, i.e., a "brother in the Lord," a phrase commonly used to this day, to describe not blood brothers but members of the Church.

Did Jesus Exist?

The Christ Conspiracy "That Jesus existed is not doubted by scholars," writes Associated Press's Richard Ostling, an assertion that is entirely incorrect. The existence of Jesus Christ, the wonderworker and son of God depicted in the New Testament, has been doubted by the scholarly and sensible since the earliest days of Christianity. This skepticism has not waned to this day, and many current scholars, including mythologists, in whose field of study this subject truly falls, are quite certain that Christ is a mythical character based on the numerous gods and heroes of the ancient world. The doubt--arrived at through extensive and exhaustive research--is evident in Ostling's very statement itself: Why, if no scholar doubts Jesus's existence, need it be reiterated? Guy Gugliotta's remark in the Washington Post is more honest: "Scholars almost universally believe Jesus existed..." The "almost" is a key word here, in that, again, there are a number of scholars who simply do not believe Jesus existed, a conclusion based on intense study untainted by blind belief. And again, why is it necessary for Gugliotta to make such a statement, unless there exists such a doubt?

CNN's Legon feels compelled to write that "...most scholars agree that Jesus existed," while stating that there is no evidence for such a belief! Hence, these scholars who believe in a "historical Jesus" do so without any reason or evidence whatsoever, except that they have been told he did and have seemingly fearfully followed consensus.

Although Ostling claims that "no scholar" doubts the existence of Jesus, Lorenzi quotes one such notable scholar, Robert Eisenman, one of the world's most knowledgeable experts on "James, the Brother of Jesus." Eisenman states categorically that he believes the James "artifact" is a forgery. His reasoning is as follows: "...the line of custody is insecure, and the inscription is too perfect. They would never have written 'brother of Jesus' in the first century." Eisenman also called the existence of Jesus "a very shaky thing" and said that the ossuary find was "too pat." (Zindler)

Hillary Mayell writes, "...historians don't doubt the existence of either James or Jesus; both are mentioned frequently in early historical records." This statement is extremely misleading. In reality, numerous scholars, historians and archaeologists over the centuries have doubted the existence of both James and Jesus, with good reason, since the two characters certainly are not "frequently mentioned in early historical records." The only place Jesus can be found is in the New Testament, despite claims regarding the forged passages in Josephus or the dubious and/or possibly forged statements of Pliny, Suetonius and Tacitus--these four are the only out of dozens of historians of the first to early second centuries to make any mention that could be remotely construed as referring to Jesus. James is also found mainly if not exclusively in the New Testament, although Robert Eisenman's voluminous work may demonstrate whence the New Testament writers derived their fictionalized James the Just character. The other "early historical records" are merely the polemical writings of the church fathers of the second century and on. Nothing whatsoever exists from the actual era of

either Jesus or James.

In attempting to establish the ossuary inscription as "authentic," reporters have faithfully reproduced the "James" passage from Josephus's *Antiquities* (XX, iv, 1), in which Josephus is made to write that James was "the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ" or other translation. For various reasons, this latter "Christ" clause, along with the more infamous "Testimonium Flavianum," has been shown to be a forgery. The Josephan James passage is as follows:

...when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity. Festus was dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrim of judges and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned.

Critics such as Gordon Rylands, author of *The Beginnings of Gnostic Christianity*, argue that the "who was called Christ" clause is an interpolation. Rylands suggests that "the brother of Jesus" is an original identifying clause by Josephus and that the Jesus referred to is likely the Jesus made high priest after Ananus, mentioned in proximity to this Josephan James. (Rylands, 266fn.) In *The Christ: a critical review and analysis of the evidences of his existence*, John Remsburg agrees that "who was called Christ" is an interpolation, and quotes numerous Christian authorities who likewise reject it as such. Also, Remsburg states that Christian tradition places James the Just's death at 69 CE, not 63. Remsburg further asserts that this Josephan James is not the Christian James at all. In any event, the James passage in Josephus certainly does not verify the gospel story in any way, shape or form. As Arthur Drews relates in *The Christ Myth*, "eminent theologians such as Credner, Schrer, etc." evinced this Christ clause a forgery, but Drews also points out that even if it were genuine it does not prove a historical Jesus. (230-231.) The same can be said of the inscription on the ossuary in question.

Rush to Judgment

Linguist Frank Zindler, who does not believe in a "historical Jesus," writes that the conclusion that the James ossuary represents "proof" of such a Jesus is a "rush to judgment." Zindler argues that the bone-box "may have nothing to do with the alleged Christian messiah." Zindler also says, "The history of the ossuary box and how it was discovered is a pale imitation of 'The Maltese Falcon' or an Indiana Jones saga." He further reports that "there are already indications, though, that many scholars are skeptical that the artifact is authentic." And, Zindler continues to reason that even if the bone-box showed a "historical Jesus" it certainly does not provide evidence that he was divine or did miracles. In other words, even if genuine the inscription does not prove the existence of the New Testament Jesus Christ. Another factor that makes the find suspicious is that it was never given proper peer review, with examination of the ossuary and its inscription by a variety of experts, before being released with great fanfare to the media. Zindler also points out that, in consideration of the plethora of hoaxes and forgeries dating from the early centuries of the Christian era, one may rightly assume that this "find" would likewise be spurious. He concludes, "The burial box

may well turn out to be just the latest in a long line of hoaxes and other questionable evidence. There is still no good, credible proof that Jesus or even his disciples really existed as men of flesh and blood."

Despite the hoopla, it remains to be seen if the ossuary and its inscription in toto are "genuine," although mythologists know that there is no chance of such a development. The Church forgery mill is notorious for cranking out thousands of fakes over the centuries, from saints' bones (relics) to Veronica's kerchief to at least 20 Shrouds to enough pieces of the "true Cross" to build a large ship. Members of the priesthood even tried to pass off several shriveled foreskins as the one holy one of Christ. The list is endless and includes countless "documents," including ridiculous correspondence between the Lord Jesus and King Agbarus, letters from the Virgin Mary, the Lentulus forgery, and hundreds of others. The James ossuary, the provenance of which is conveniently unknown, may very well prove to be yet another of these bogus artifacts. As Lorenzi says, "Nothing is known of its history prior to the current ownership..." This assertion would remain true even if the limestone did indeed come from the "Holy Land." Forgers are at times very clever, as we have seen in modern times. The patina of the writing may suggest that it was inscribed many centuries ago, perhaps at the time when the ossuary was carved; however, that does not mean that it dates to the first century CE. Again, that date is ascribed circularly because, if James died around 62-63, then his ossuary must be from that time. To repeat, despite the claims regarding the Israeli government's geological survey tests, the James ossuary could well be from the era of great Church forgery following the "conversion" of Constantine.

Such spectacular finds as the James ossuary frequently cement their discoverer in history, which certainly qualifies as motive for fervently presenting dubious or even clearly bogus "artifacts" as authentic, as does the million-dollar price tag. Time and again, overzealous scholars and pseudoscholars have popped up with sensational finds, such as "The Hitler Diaries," only to have them revealed as forgeries. The suspicion regarding this ossuary leads one to such unfavorable conclusions.

Jesus's Sandals Found!!! Illustrating the depths stooped to over the years when faith outweighs reason, a cover story for that bastion of journalistic accuracy, the Weekly World News (11/5/02), claims "JESUS' SANDALS FOUND! STEP IN THESE SHOES & FEEL HIS MIRACLE HEALING POWER," complete with a picture of ratty old leather sandals. Inside, it is explained that the sandals were found by "an intrepid Vatican treasure hunter!" The article's author, Vincenzo Sardi, relates, "Hundreds of devout pilgrims are flocking to see the holy relics..." According to Sardi, the astounding discovery has been making headlines all over Italy, and the faithful are receiving miraculous healing powers merely by standing on the newspaper photos of the sandals! The Weekly World News' expert is a "Vatican-affiliated archaeologist," Dr. Roberto Savici, who declared, "There is no question that these sandals, once worn by Our Lord, have some kind of extraordinary aura." Says Sardi, "Dr. Savici is 100 percent sure that the sandals, which have been scientifically dated to the early part of the First Century A.D., are the genuine article." Savici says, "We compared tread marks on the bottom of the sandals to the only known footprints of Jesus, on a rock near the Sea of Galilee--it was a perfect match." The method used to "scientifically date" these sandals seems to

be the same as that which was used with the James ossuary. Although, thousands of readers doubtlessly will believe that such a method exists, in reality it does not. The claim regarding the matching of the treads with those found on a rock is a nice touch for the extremely gullible. In actuality, these "footprints" of the gods or demigods, such as Buddha, exist all over the world and are priestcraft artifacts.

Savici further claims the sandals, stripped from Jesus by the Romans during his crucifixion, have been in the possession of a "Venetian family" for generations, to be discovered by "the expert" after "11 years of detective work." While even believing Christians may find this article laughable, what makes it any less credible than the stories released by the mainstream press? The expert archaeologist Savici is presented as having "Vatican-affiliated" credentials, which surely gives him as much credibility as Lemaire, if not more. So important are Savici and his find that the Pope Himself has requested the sandals be brought to Rome, "to the vault where they'll join the Holy Robe and all the other Christ relics." Now, if we can't believe the Pope, who can we believe?! Even the Holy Robe is there, "in the vault," with "other Christ relics!" Surely these must all be authentic; yet, why haven't all these finds been shouted the world over, like the so-called James ossuary? Could it be because they are bogus? Why, that would make liars of the Pope, God's Holy Emissary on earth, and his cronies! If we admit that these "relics" are phonies, then we may also be suspicious of the James ossuary, which could be fake, or at the most, useless in establishing a "historical Jesus."

The Jewish collector who possessed the ossuary, Lemaire claims, did not recognize its value because to him, "Jesus was known as the son of God, so he had no brother," an unusual attitude for a Jew. The antique dealer who sold the box to the anonymous collector for \$500-700, per CNN, also apparently had no clue as to its value, which is difficult to believe. This person could not have been much of an antiques dealer, or perhaps he knew it was bogus. One would think that the dealer would have tried to sell it to the Vatican, had he believed it was a genuine artifact. There is a precedent for such ignorant behavior, however: In the 1950s, some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were advertised in a New York newspaper for a paltry sum. Nevertheless, such a lax attitude does not instill confidence in the dealer, provenance or the artifact itself.

In any event, the inscription on the James ossuary will leave Orthodox and Catholic Christians with a bad taste in their mouths, since Jesus was supposedly the only child of the Virgin Mary. Protestants believe that Jesus had siblings, but that Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to her first-born, Jesus. A forger, therefore, would most likely be of the Protestant mentality. Yet, this suggestion does not assert that the ossuary was not forged until after the Protestant Reformation; it is possible that earlier Christians of the same doctrine (such as some of the early Church fathers) may have been the culprits. Or, some recent scalawag has taken an ancient ossuary belonging to Jacob ben Josef and very poorly scratched in "brother of Jesus" at the end.

The facts surrounding the appearance of the ossuary, the pronouncements concerning the inscription by doubting experts, its unknown provenance, etc., cast doubt onto its authenticity and value as an artifact proving anything from the era of Jesus's advent. In

reality, the conclusion that the ossuary is the "first proof" or "earliest evidence" or "only evidence" of Jesus dating to his purported era is a startling admission that there is, after 2,000 years, no unquestionable evidence of Jesus Christ's existence. Whenever some "artifact" or "evidence" of this sort appears, it is wise to express amazement that it has taken 2,000 years to find proof of Jesus, a demigod who supposedly shook up the world. Especially since he, as God Almighty, has purportedly been supernaturally in charge of everything. Since Jesus is claimed to be omnipotent, one would think that he would be able to prove himself and his existence on earth many times over. Yet, such is not the case, as this pitiful box, with its inconclusive inscription, is the only "proof" we have after two millennia. It's just not to be--it would not be smart to hold one's breath. The proof of a fictional character having lived on earth will simply never appear.

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Bone-Box No Proof of Jesus
by Acharya S/D.M. Murdock

(NB: This article was published in a three-part series in the magazine Secular Nation, at the suggestion of Dr. Robert Price, who called the series "fine articles." Secular Nation had never published a three-part article before.)

James Ossuray Bone Box Brother of JesusIn the week of October 21, 2002, headlines around the world screamed that evidence of Jesus Christ had been found in the form of an ossuary, or bone-box, supposedly once containing the bones of "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus," as was inscribed on the box in Aramaic. The original scholar who reported this spectacular find, the Sorbonne's biblical expert Andre Lemaire, "born a Catholic," concluded it was "very probable" that the inscription referred to Jesus of Nazareth, i.e., Jesus Christ. The ossuary, therefore, would supposedly be that of the biblical "James the Just," who is referred to as Jesus's "brother" at Matthew 13:55 and Galatians 1:19. Naturally, Christian apologists and fanatics rubbed their hands together, and gleefully and smugly bombarded nonbelievers with the news via email. But was there really some wondrous "new proof" of Jesus that would set the record straight once and for all, or was it all another bit of faithful flotsam?

In actuality, it seems to be time once again for the world's religious handlers to pull out another holy relic in order to bolster up the flagging faith. Such shenanigans have been behind the incessant news releases regarding the Shroud of Turin (a more bogus relic there never was), the recent "depiction" of what Jesus would have looked like (a Neanderthal), and the never-ending slew of books concerning the "real Jesus," who invariably resembles the authors of said books. To those who have been around a while and have developed a jaundiced eye, this latest "find" is yet more of the same "evidence."

The original Biblical Archaeology Review article that scooped this story was blatant and injudicious in its pronouncements, flatly stating that "This container [ossuary] provides the only New Testament-era mention of the central figure of Christianity and is the first-ever archaeological discovery to corroborate Biblical references to Jesus."

Hillary Mayell, writing for the National Geographic (10/21/02), said, "Researchers may have uncovered the first archaeological evidence that refers to Jesus as an actual person and identifies James, the first leader of the Christian church, as his brother."

The article on MSNBC's website regarding the ossuary stated, "No physical artifact from the first century related to him has been discovered and verified."

CNN's Jeordan Legon, in an article entitled, "Scholars: Oldest Evidence of Jesus?" writes, "While most scholars agree that Jesus existed, no physical evidence from the first century has ever been conclusively tied with his life."

Newsweek's Kenneth Woodward opens his article, "A Clue to Jesus?" (11/4/02) by stating:

"Although Jesus of Nazareth is a universally recognized figure, no one has ever

found any evidence for his existence apart from texts."

Rossella Lorenzi's article in Discovery News is entitled "First Proof of Jesus Found?" This title allows for a couple of interpretations, including that the bone box is the earliest evidence yet discovered. However, in the initial sentence Lorenzi says, "The first archaeological evidence of Jesus' existence has come to light..." and she repeats that "the new find would be the first archaeological discovery to corroborate Biblical references to Jesus," indicating the proper interpretation of the headline to be that there was no prior evidence.

Moreover, Dan Rahimi, the "director of collections" for the museum where it is being housed, stated, "A lot of people accept the reality of Jesus as a historical figure but don't accept him as Christ, and to use the words 'before Christ' is really quite ethnocentric of European Christians..." The article reporting this comment also relates, "Even the date of Jesus' own birth has been disputed for centuries, with many scholars asserting it took place between 4 and 7 B.C., in the autumn months."

On their face value, such headlines and comments imply that there has never been any other proof of Jesus ever found. Such an assertion is quite astounding, considering that Jesus Christ was supposedly a man who shook up the world and purportedly has been supernaturally in charge of the cosmos for the past 2,000 years! What these remarks regarding the "only New Testament-era mention," "first-ever archaeological discovery," "first archaeological evidence," "oldest evidence," and "first proof" reflect is that there has previously been no direct evidence that Jesus Christ ever existed. Moreover, the comment that "a lot of people accept the reality of Jesus as a historical figure" implies that many people recognize this dearth of evidence and do not accept him as "historical figure." In addition, the admission that Jesus's birth date is basically unknown further undermines his "historical reality."

Ossuaries Not Uncommon

Sending thrills through the Christian community, Lemaire dated the ossuary and inscription to 63 CE, which places it squarely in the time of active Christian church-building. Although the faithful believe that this astonishing pronouncement was rooted in science, Lemaire's precise dating is based on the a priori assumption that the find is indeed the bone-box of James the Just, the disciple whose death is assigned by Christians to the year 62 CE. Nevertheless, it is not the case that the ossuary contains an inscribed date or is conclusively dated by other means to exactly 63 CE and must therefore represent the burial box of James the Just. In other words, the dating is based on circular reasoning: Since James died in 62 CE, and since this is apparently his ossuary, it must date to 63 CE, when his bones would have been placed in it. There is no proof, however, that James died in that year or that this is his ossuary. Yet, triumphant apologists will falsely claim that this ossuary has conclusively been proved to be that of James and to date to exactly the right time! As is well known to those who have scientifically investigated so many previous Christian claims, apologists constantly use this type of flawed logic. To repeat, even though news reports make it seem the box itself contains this very date, in reality the dating of 63 CE attached to this particular ossuary is based on the tradition of James's death, not because the box possesses a

dated inscription or there is some other precise dating method.

According to CNN, the "Israeli government's geological survey test" concluded that "the object is more than 19 centuries old," but the author cites BAR as the source, and this particular statement does not appear on the BAR website article. Jewsweek.com's Debra Berman reports, "The Geological Survey of Israel conducted electron-microscope tests on the box that proved the inscription was not added at a later date; no traces of modern elements were found." Apparently, however, this claim is erroneous, as another Jewsweek writer, Rochelle Altman, debunks the last part of the inscription. Hence, such "scientific" tests are questionable; even if the entire inscription were genuine, electron-microscope dating could not pinpoint the exact year. Even carbon-dating, which is used to date organic remains, not stone, has an error factor of + or -150 years. Hence, this limestone box, which is nevertheless apparently fairly old, based on the fact that it cracked severely during transport, could date from another century altogether, particularly the two to three following Jesus's purported advent. Supposedly also the box was heavily damaged specifically by a crack in the inscription. The ossuary's handlers have been surprisingly careless, especially considering how priceless would be this artifact, were it and/or its inscription genuine.

In "First Proof of Jesus Found?," Lorenzi uses another tactic that is convincing at first glance: She states that during the first century these ossuaries were used in "the second of a two-stage burial process, when bones of the deceased were transferred from burial caves." By saying "In the first century," the writer is implying that such a use is unique to that century, thus giving the find even more credibility as deriving from the correct era.

Although these enthusiastic newsbites make it seem otherwise, the James ossuary is not unusual, nor is it necessarily dated to the convenient year of 63 CE. In giving his contrived date a professional flourish, Lemaire also claimed the box must date from the first century because it fits in with when "Jews" used ossuaries, between 20 BCE and 70 CE. While it may be argued that "Jews," i.e., members of the tribe of Judah and territory of Judea, used ossuaries "only" between those dates, it is quite clear that their predecessors, Canaanites, Israelites and Hebrews, utilized them for centuries prior to that. The site of Hederah in northern Israel, for example, yielded numerous fragments and complete ossuaries, some of which were in the exact square shape as that of James's. There were other shapes as well, including one that resembled a house, with a peaked roof. These finds were dated by their discoverer, E.L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University, to the fourth millennium BCE. (Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, II, 496.) Sukenik concluded that these house-shaped vessels were akin to the "soul-houses" of the Egyptians and "house urns" of the Europeans. Finds at other sites that confirm these dates include those at Azor, Bene-Berek and Tel Aviv. (EAEHL, II, 496.) As we can see, this type of vessel is not uncommon and does not necessarily date to the first centuries BCE-CE.

In actuality, the use of ossuaries even in the Palestine/Judea area dates back to at least the Second Temple Period and continued for several centuries into the Common Era. In other words, even "Jews" used ossuaries well beyond the fall of the Temple, i.e., 70 CE.

Based on findings from the Jerusalem necropolis of the Second Temple Period (6th cent. BCE-70 CE), the editor of the Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land, Michael Avi-Yonah, says, "The custom of re-internment of the bones (in ossuaries) was widespread among Jews at the end of the Second Temple Period and for several centuries afterwards. Numerous laws in the Mishnah and Talmud deal with the modes of burial and the form and size of tombs." (Emphasis added.) These burials refer specifically to ossuaries, which were used once the flesh had decayed, leaving the bones alone. (EAEHL, II, 628.) Obviously, the ossuary-burial did not end in 70 CE, so Lemaire's terminus a quem is erroneous, as is his terminus a quo. Hence, this ossuary and its inscription could date from any of several centuries, including the Constantinian era, when bogus relics and forged texts were all the rage. As can be seen, ossuaries in Jerusalem were fairly common as well, so that, if the James ossuary is bogus, its creator would have plenty of examples upon which to draw.

Furthermore, as Avi-Yonah states regarding the numerous bone-boxes found in the Tombs at Dominus Flevit, which contained "122 ossuaries of the usual type [square]," common names included Jeshua or Yeshua (Jesus) and Maria (Mary). (EAEHL, II, 636.) In one of the surviving family tombs in Jerusalem are 18 ossuaries with Greek inscriptions, one of which contains the names "Joseph" (twice) and "Maria." (EAEHL, II, 635.) By the typical media and religious standards this tomb should have been exalted as that of Jesus's family.

In another example, in the "Tomb Cave in the Talpiot Quarter, discovered in 1945," are found large charcoal crosses on one of the ossuaries, while "two other ossuaries had Greek inscriptions reading IhsouV iou. IhsouV alwq," a phrase that contains the name Jesus twice. "The excavator interpreted the crosses and the inscriptions as expressions of sorrow at the crucifixion of Jesus, an interpretation not accepted by other scholars." The tomb itself dates to the beginning of the first century and demonstrates the commonality of the name Jesus before the purported time of the Christian messiah. (EAEHL, II, 635.) If this Jesus tomb had dated to a few decades later, no doubt the media and faithful would have had a field day in presenting it as the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth, thus "proving" the biblical fable, although these two tombs mentioned herein would certainly infuriate the keepers and believers in the "Holy Sepulchre," yet another profitable tourist attraction. It would be surprising that no such incautious and mirthful rush to judgment has occurred concerning this particular Jesus tomb. In reality, at least one sloppy sensationalist author has claimed this tomb to be that of "Jesus of Nazareth," asserting that the tomb also contained the ossuaries of not only a Jesus, but also a Joseph, two Marys and a Jude. The excavation report, however, does not mention these other burials, leaving the question as to whether or not this particular author is prone to fiction, as is suggested by his other writings as well. As is evident, looks can be deceiving, such that caution should be utilized in regard to artifacts.

In Jerusalem there is even a "Tomb of Jason," complete with an ossuary and a scratched image of a warship, which could lead to the conclusion that this is the tomb of the Jason of Greek mythology. "On the walls of the porch are charcoal drawings of ships, a Greek inscription, and several Aramaic inscriptions, the longest of which consists of three lines lamenting Jason, the deceased." (EAEHL, II, 630) Using coins

and pottery, the tomb is dated to having been used between the Hasmonean (2nd-1st cent. BCE) and the Herodian eras (37 BCE-70 CE). Although it is evidently the tomb of a real person of that era, true believers in the demigod Jason of Argonaut fame could attempt in the same manner as Christians to "prove" the existence of Jason and his Argonauts, such as Hercules, as "real people."

The name or epithet "Jason," meaning "healer" was commonly utilized in describing "Pagan" gods such as Asklepios, whose cult extended far and wide in the ancient Mediterranean world. As stated by Bronsen Wickkiser, fellow of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Asklepios was "known as a healer since Homer," and his cult spread rapidly at the "beginning of the late fifth century B.C." "So popular was he," says Wickkiser, "that his sanctuaries spanned the ancient world, from Hispania in the west to Ecbatana in the east." Hence, we have for several centuries prior to the Christian era a healing god--called "Iasios," "Iesios," i.e., Jason or Jesus--whose sanctuaries were widespread around the Mediterranean. A healer associated with these gods might be called a "brother of Jason" or a "brother of Jesus," long before the Christian era. Indeed, all roads point to Christianity as an expose of the secret Pagan rituals that concerned a healing god with long curly hair who rose from the dead, etc. This particular designation of the "brother of Jesus" has been one of four that have been bandied about since early times. The news reports regarding the James ossuary mention only three: 1. James was Jesus's blood brother, born of the Virgin Mary; 2. James was one of Joseph's children by another marriage; or 3. James was Jesus's "cousin." These reports ignore what is likely the most appropriate, i.e., that "James" was a member of a brotherhood such as the Nazarites or Nazarenes.

As Frank Zindler points out, the "brother of Yeshua" (Joshua/Jesus) could also be translated "the brother of the Savior," which would indicate a title of someone involved in a specific society or cult, rather than a familial bloodline. The fact that James is cited in this inscription as the "son of Joseph, brother of Jesus" creates suspicion since it is by no means agreed within all the Christian sects that Jesus had any blood brothers, despite the assertions in the New Testament. The wording on the James ossuary, if it is to be interpreted as referring to a blood brother born of Mary, would indicate that of the many sects one particular was involved in its apparent forgery. A Protestant minister at the Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, Ben Witherington III, argues that the phrase "brother of Jesus" refers to a blood brother, giving etymological reasons for his assumption. However, in an article from Believenet.net and reproduced by ABCNEWS.com, Witherington ironically uses a passage from Acts 15:13-21, in which James is made to address a group of men using the word "Brethren." The word in the original Greek for "brethren," i.e., brothers, is adelphoi, which is the plural of the word, adelphos, used to describe James at Galatians 1 and elsewhere. Witherington argues that this word adelphos, as in Philadelphia, "City of Brotherly Love," probably refers to blood brothers. Yet, in the passage at Acts, James is clearly not referring to blood brothers but to "brothers" in the sense of the word as used by the clergy and members of other brotherhoods and fraternities into modern times. The proper usage concerning James is in reality the fourth interpretation, which is that to be called a "brother" means you are a member of a male-based society, church, organization, secret or otherwise. In another instance, Witherington points out the phrase in 1 Cor. 15:3-9, which discusses

"500 brethren." Now, if that refers to Jesus's blood family, he certainly had many brothers! It is quite clear that the phrase "500 brothers" refers to members of the community, not a family, so why has this meaning been ignored constantly over the centuries? Matthew 13:55-56 also mentions Jesus's "sisters," but this phrase too is usually ignored. As we know, such Christian communities as the Quakers refer to their female members as "sisters," while their male members are "brothers."

Unbeknownst to the masses, tombs of gods are common around the world and are part of well-established priestcraft. The mention of a character on such a tomb or ossuary does not prove that the person really existed. No doubt many Indians, for example, have recorded the names of their various gods on their own epitaphs--by this "logic," all these gods would have to have existed as "historical characters." Certainly in ancient Egypt Osiris and Isis were included in all solemn events, especially burials, and Osiris's numerous tombs may be found all over Egypt--they therefore must have been real people!

Aramaic for an Orthodox Jew?

A scan of the ossuaries dating from the Herodian period reveals that many, if not most, were inscribed in Hebrew and Greek, not Aramaic. It would seem unusual for an orthodox Jew such as James, as he has been shown to have been by Robert Eisenman, et al., to have his epitaph written in Aramaic, which is Syriac, the language of the northern kingdom, as opposed to Hebrew, which was that of Judea and of "true" Jews. Educated Jews may have settled on Greek, but possibly not Aramaic. The Aramaic inscriptions on the "Jewish" ossuaries seem to be mainly warnings, advising "Do not open it." It is possible that inscriptions written in Aramaic were designed for the common people, the speakers of the vulgar lingua franca, rather than for the elite, for whom the Greek and Hebrew inscriptions were written. Having this identification written in Aramaic might also be a bit suspicious, even though there were some ossuaries in family tombs with Aramaic writing. Yet, again, for an orthodox Jew? It is possible that a forger supposed, as have millions of Christians, that historical Jesus spoke Aramaic, as would his purported sibling, James; therefore, in order for the inscription to appear "authentic," according to Christian tradition, it should be written in Aramaic.

James Ossuary Bone Box writingBAR reports that, according to Lemaire, the cursive style of Aramaic in which the inscription appears occurred only from 10-70 CE. Lorenzi also writes that the inscription's cursive Aramaic "would date the ossuary to the last decades of 70 A.D." This latter statement is meaningless, as it is undoubtedly a typo. In any case, it should be noted that epigraphy is an inexact science and that clever forgers have been able to replicate just about any style imaginable. That the style "fits perfectly" with the writing of the era, as stated by Lemaire and Catholic University's Joseph Fitzmyer, proves little, since, again, forgers are often well skilled in reproducing styles. In the end, Fitzmyer honestly concluded that nobody can show that the box's "Jesus" is really Jesus of Nazareth.

The study of such ossuaries reveals that, as is claimed by Lemaire, et al., it is true that the inscriptions usually ran something like: "Judah son of Johanan, son of Jethra," rather than including a brother's name. This fact concerning the James ossuary would

actually cast doubt as to its genuineness; indeed, it seems contrived in order to prove a point., i.e., the existence of Jesus. Indeed, in an article "Ossuary was genuine, inscription was faked," for Jewsworld magazine, "expert on scripts and historian of writing systems" Rochelle I. Altman has pronounced the ossuary genuine, as well as the first part of the inscription. However, the last part, "brother of Jesus" is unquestionably a sloppy fake. Says she:

The bone-box is original; the first inscription, which is in Aramaic, "Jacob son of Joseph," is authentic. The second half of the inscription, "brother of Jesus," is a poorly executed fake and a later addition. This report has already been distributed on at least two scholarly lists.

Altman also notes that the phrase is certainly not written in Aramaic and "You have to be blind as a bat not to see that the second part is a fraud." Altman is no naysaying slouch: She has "a great deal of experience at spotting ancient frauds and forgeries." As such an expert, Altman was able to determine that the James ossuary inscription was clearly written by two different people. The inscriber of the first part was a member of the family and "fully literate," says she, while the "person who wrote the second part...may have been literate, but it is doubtful that he was literate in Aramaic or Hebrew." Also, Altman points out that the original excised frame around the first part of the inscription had to be removed to fit the last, faked part, i.e., "brother of Jesus." Even to the untrained eye, it is obvious that the latter part of the inscription, i.e., "Brother of Jesus," was written by a different, less skillful hand than the first part.

According to the Ottawa Citizen, another expert, Eric Meyers, professor of Judaic studies at Duke University, also has a "bad feeling" that the inscription is a forgery, noting that its owner is being investigated by authorities for theft of "an object now worth between \$1-million and \$2-million dollars if its authenticity holds up under scrutiny." Meyers relates Altman's conclusion that "the brother of Jesus" part of the inscription is in a different hand from the rest and dates to centuries later. Obviously, such a potential payoff would provide--and has provided--motive for fraud.

The James ossuary is suspicious not only for the lack of its provenance, a development frequently indicating a forgery, but also for the tidiness of its inscription, which seems to have been written not by an early "innocent" Christian but by a propagandist such as those who created so many bogus relics over the centuries. Unfortunately, the news reports, which include conclusions that the ossuary is "genuine," never mention the countless forgeries and fraudulent Christian artifacts of centuries past, a fact that would surely provoke caution in more prudent observers.

Too Many Jesuses

Although the reports claimed that the odds of the combination of the three names James, Joseph and Jesus appearing together on an ossuary are "very slim," even Lemaire admits that there could have been about "20 Jameses in Jerusalem during that era [who] would have had a father named Joseph and a brother named Jesus." (MSNBC) Zindler also remarks that there were many individuals in Judea and Palestine by the names of James, Joseph and Jesus, such that, even if "the brother of Jesus" part

of the inscription were genuine, the odds of having these particular relationships are far greater than what has been designated by believing scholars such as Lemaire. Indeed, we have already seen examples of such names on various tombs and ossuaries from the "Holy Land."

The believing argument runs that, because it is unusual to include the name of a brother in one's epitaph, this brother must have been a "well-known figure." There are, in fact, "too many Jesuses" of renown, as Harold Leidner shows in his book *The Fabrication of the Christ Myth*. These Jesuses, as found in the works of the Jewish historian Josephus and in biblical texts, include the following (list quoted from Leidner, 19-20):

- Jesus son of Naue
- Jesus son of Saul
- Jesus, high priest, son of Phineas
- Jesus son of the high priest Jozadak
- Jesus son of Joiada
- Jesus, high priest, son of Simon
- Jesus, high priest, son of Phabes
- Jesus, high priest, son of See
- Jesus the Christ
- Jesus son of Damnaeus, became high priest
- Jesus son of Gamaliel, became high priest
- Jesus son of Sapphas
- Jesus, chief priest, probably to be identified with 10 or 11
- Jesus son of Gamalas, high priest
- Jesus, brigand chief on borderland of Ptolemais
- Jesus son of Sapphias
- Jesus brother of Chares
- Jesus a Galilean, perhaps to be identified with 15
- Jesus in ambushade, perhaps to be identified with 16
- Jesus, priest, son of Thebuthi
- Jesus, son of Ananias, rude peasant, prophesies the fall of Jerusalem.

Among these many Jesuses is Jesus, son of Naue, also known as Joshua, son of Nun, the Old Testament messianic figure who supposedly led the Israelites into the Promised Land after Moses failed to do so. It has been demonstrated over the past couple of centuries, and confirmed by the Dead Sea Scrolls, that there was a sort of "Joshua" cult long before the Christian era, revolving around this important Israelite "hero." Apparently, however, "Joshua" or Yeshua ("Savior") was an ancient Canaanite god usurped by the followers of the volcano god Yahweh. In any case, Joshua's position in the Old Testament is one of high estimation: He is the heir to Moses as God's spokesman and will on earth. Joshua is essentially the messiah, and it would seem that members of the northern kingdom, such as those Israelites who eventually became called "Samaritans," virtually worshipped him. Interestingly, the name Joshua or Yeshua is rendered in the the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint, as JESUS. Hence, a reader of that all-important text would see the name Jesus a couple of hundred times for centuries prior to the Christian era. To repeat, while the articles regarding the James

ossuary state that there are only three lines of thought concerning the phrase "brother of Jesus," i.e., James was a blood brother, a stepbrother or a cousin, a more likely explanation is that he was a member of a secret Joshua/Jesus society, i.e., a "brother in the Lord," a phrase commonly used to this day, to describe not blood brothers but members of the Church.

Did Jesus Exist?

The Christ Conspiracy "That Jesus existed is not doubted by scholars," writes Associated Press's Richard Ostling, an assertion that is entirely incorrect. The existence of Jesus Christ, the wonderworker and son of God depicted in the New Testament, has been doubted by the scholarly and sensible since the earliest days of Christianity. This skepticism has not waned to this day, and many current scholars, including mythologists, in whose field of study this subject truly falls, are quite certain that Christ is a mythical character based on the numerous gods and heroes of the ancient world. The doubt--arrived at through extensive and exhaustive research--is evident in Ostling's very statement itself: Why, if no scholar doubts Jesus's existence, need it be reiterated? Guy Gugliotta's remark in the Washington Post is more honest: "Scholars almost universally believe Jesus existed..." The "almost" is a key word here, in that, again, there are a number of scholars who simply do not believe Jesus existed, a conclusion based on intense study untainted by blind belief. And again, why is it necessary for Gugliotta to make such a statement, unless there exists such a doubt?

CNN's Legon feels compelled to write that "...most scholars agree that Jesus existed," while stating that there is no evidence for such a belief! Hence, these scholars who believe in a "historical Jesus" do so without any reason or evidence whatsoever, except that they have been told he did and have seemingly fearfully followed consensus.

Although Ostling claims that "no scholar" doubts the existence of Jesus, Lorenzi quotes one such notable scholar, Robert Eisenman, one of the world's most knowledgeable experts on "James, the Brother of Jesus." Eisenman states categorically that he believes the James "artifact" is a forgery. His reasoning is as follows: "...the line of custody is insecure, and the inscription is too perfect. They would never have written 'brother of Jesus' in the first century." Eisenman also called the existence of Jesus "a very shaky thing" and said that the ossuary find was "too pat." (Zindler)

Hillary Mayell writes, "...historians don't doubt the existence of either James or Jesus; both are mentioned frequently in early historical records." This statement is extremely misleading. In reality, numerous scholars, historians and archaeologists over the centuries have doubted the existence of both James and Jesus, with good reason, since the two characters certainly are not "frequently mentioned in early historical records." The only place Jesus can be found is in the New Testament, despite claims regarding the forged passages in Josephus or the dubious and/or possibly forged statements of Pliny, Suetonius and Tacitus--these four are the only out of dozens of historians of the first to early second centuries to make any mention that could be remotely construed as referring to Jesus. James is also found mainly if not exclusively in the New Testament, although Robert Eisenman's voluminous work may demonstrate whence the New Testament writers derived their fictionalized James the Just character.

The other "early historical records" are merely the polemical writings of the church fathers of the second century and on. Nothing whatsoever exists from the actual era of either Jesus or James.

In attempting to establish the ossuary inscription as "authentic," reporters have faithfully reproduced the "James" passage from Josephus's *Antiquities* (XX, iv, 1), in which Josephus is made to write that James was "the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ" or other translation. For various reasons, this latter "Christ" clause, along with the more infamous "Testimonium Flavianum," has been shown to be a forgery. The Josephan James passage is as follows:

...when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity. Festus was dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrim of judges and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned.

Critics such as Gordon Rylands, author of *The Beginnings of Gnostic Christianity*, argue that the "who was called Christ" clause is an interpolation. Rylands suggests that "the brother of Jesus" is an original identifying clause by Josephus and that the Jesus referred to is likely the Jesus made high priest after Ananus, mentioned in proximity to this Josephan James. (Rylands, 266fn.) In *The Christ: a critical review and analysis of the evidences of his existence*, John Remsburg agrees that "who was called Christ" is an interpolation, and quotes numerous Christian authorities who likewise reject it as such. Also, Remsburg states that Christian tradition places James the Just's death at 69 CE, not 63. Remsburg further asserts that this Josephan James is not the Christian James at all. In any event, the James passage in Josephus certainly does not verify the gospel story in any way, shape or form. As Arthur Drews relates in *The Christ Myth*, "eminent theologians such as Credner, Schrur, etc." evinced this Christ clause a forgery, but Drews also points out that even if it were genuine it does not prove a historical Jesus. (230-231.) The same can be said of the inscription on the ossuary in question.

Rush to Judgment

Linguist Frank Zindler, who does not believe in a "historical Jesus," writes that the conclusion that the James ossuary represents "proof" of such a Jesus is a "rush to judgment." Zindler argues that the bone-box "may have nothing to do with the alleged Christian messiah." Zindler also says, "The history of the ossuary box and how it was discovered is a pale imitation of 'The Maltese Falcon' or an Indiana Jones saga." He further reports that "there are already indications, though, that many scholars are skeptical that the artifact is authentic." And, Zindler continues to reason that even if the bone-box showed a "historical Jesus" it certainly does not provide evidence that he was divine or did miracles. In other words, even if genuine the inscription does not prove the existence of the New Testament Jesus Christ. Another factor that makes the find suspicious is that it was never given proper peer review, with examination of the ossuary and its inscription by a variety of experts, before being released with great fanfare to the media. Zindler also points out that, in consideration of the plethora of

hoaxes and forgeries dating from the early centuries of the Christian era, one may rightly assume that this "find" would likewise be spurious. He concludes, "The burial box may well turn out to be just the latest in a long line of hoaxes and other questionable evidence. There is still no good, credible proof that Jesus or even his disciples really existed as men of flesh and blood."

Despite the hoopla, it remains to be seen if the ossuary and its inscription in toto are "genuine," although mythologists know that there is no chance of such a development. The Church forgery mill is notorious for cranking out thousands of fakes over the centuries, from saints' bones (relics) to Veronica's kerchief to at least 20 Shrouds to enough pieces of the "true Cross" to build a large ship. Members of the priestcraft even tried to pass off several shriveled foreskins as the one holy one of Christ. The list is endless and includes countless "documents," including ridiculous correspondence between the Lord Jesus and King Agbarus, letters from the Virgin Mary, the Lentulus forgery, and hundreds of others. The James ossuary, the provenance of which is conveniently unknown, may very well prove to be yet another of these bogus artifacts. As Lorenzi says, "Nothing is known of its history prior to the current ownership..." This assertion would remain true even if the limestone did indeed come from the "Holy Land." Forgers are at times very clever, as we have seen in modern times. The patina of the writing may suggest that it was inscribed many centuries ago, perhaps at the time when the ossuary was carved; however, that does not mean that it dates to the first century CE. Again, that date is ascribed circularly because, if James died around 62-63, then his ossuary must be from that time. To repeat, despite the claims regarding the Israeli government's geological survey tests, the James ossuary could well be from the era of great Church forgery following the "conversion" of Constantine.

Such spectacular finds as the James ossuary frequently cement their discoverer in history, which certainly qualifies as motive for fervently presenting dubious or even clearly bogus "artifacts" as authentic, as does the million-dollar price tag. Time and again, overzealous scholars and pseudoscholars have popped up with sensational finds, such as "The Hitler Diaries," only to have them revealed as forgeries. The suspicion regarding this ossuary leads one to such unfavorable conclusions.

Jesus's Sandals Found! Illustrating the depths stooped to over the years when faith outweighs reason, a cover story for that bastion of journalistic accuracy, the Weekly World News (11/5/02), claims "JESUS' SANDALS FOUND! STEP IN THESE SHOES & FEEL HIS MIRACLE HEALING POWER," complete with a picture of ratty old leather sandals. Inside, it is explained that the sandals were found by "an intrepid Vatican treasure hunter!" The article's author, Vincenzo Sardi, relates, "Hundreds of devout pilgrims are flocking to see the holy relics..." According to Sardi, the astounding discovery has been making headlines all over Italy, and the faithful are receiving miraculous healing powers merely by standing on the newspaper photos of the sandals! The Weekly World News' expert is a "Vatican-affiliated archaeologist," Dr. Roberto Savici, who declared, "There is no question that these sandals, once worn by Our Lord, have some kind of extraordinary aura." Says Sardi, "Dr. Savici is 100 percent sure that the sandals, which have been scientifically dated to the early part of the First Century A.D., are the genuine article." Savici says, "We compared tread marks on the bottom of

the sandals to the only known footprints of Jesus, on a rock near the Sea of Galilee--it was a perfect match." The method used to "scientifically date" these sandals seems to be the same as that which was used with the James ossuary. Although, thousands of readers doubtlessly will believe that such a method exists, in reality it does not. The claim regarding the matching of the treads with those found on a rock is a nice touch for the extremely gullible. In actuality, these "footprints" of the gods or demigods, such as Buddha, exist all over the world and are priestcraft artifacts.

Savici further claims the sandals, stripped from Jesus by the Romans during his crucifixion, have been in the possession of a "Venetian family" for generations, to be discovered by "the expert" after "11 years of detective work." While even believing Christians may find this article laughable, what makes it any less credible than the stories released by the mainstream press? The expert archaeologist Savici is presented as having "Vatican-affiliated" credentials, which surely gives him as much credibility as Lemaire, if not more. So important are Savici and his find that the Pope Himself has requested the sandals be brought to Rome, "to the vault where they'll join the Holy Robe and all the other Christ relics." Now, if we can't believe the Pope, who can we believe?! Even the Holy Robe is there, "in the vault," with "other Christ relics!" Surely these must all be authentic; yet, why haven't all these finds been shouted the world over, like the so-called James ossuary? Could it be because they are bogus? Why, that would make liars of the Pope, God's Holy Emissary on earth, and his cronies! If we admit that these "relics" are phonies, then we may also be suspicious of the James ossuary, which could be fake, or at the most, useless in establishing a "historical Jesus."

The Jewish collector who possessed the ossuary, Lemaire claims, did not recognize its value because to him, "Jesus was known as the son of God, so he had no brother," an unusual attitude for a Jew. The antique dealer who sold the box to the anonymous collector for \$500-700, per CNN, also apparently had no clue as to its value, which is difficult to believe. This person could not have been much of an antiques dealer, or perhaps he knew it was bogus. One would think that the dealer would have tried to sell it to the Vatican, had he believed it was a genuine artifact. There is a precedent for such ignorant behavior, however: In the 1950s, some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were advertised in a New York newspaper for a paltry sum. Nevertheless, such a lax attitude does not instill confidence in the dealer, provenance or the artifact itself.

In any event, the inscription on the James ossuary will leave Orthodox and Catholic Christians with a bad taste in their mouths, since Jesus was supposedly the only child of the Virgin Mary. Protestants believe that Jesus had siblings, but that Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to her first-born, Jesus. A forger, therefore, would most likely be of the Protestant mentality. Yet, this suggestion does not assert that the ossuary was not forged until after the Protestant Reformation; it is possible that earlier Christians of the same doctrine (such as some of the early Church fathers) may have been the culprits. Or, some recent scalawag has taken an ancient ossuary belonging to Jacob ben Josef and very poorly scratched in "brother of Jesus" at the end.

The facts surrounding the appearance of the ossuary, the pronouncements concerning

the inscription by doubting experts, its unknown provenance, etc., cast doubt onto its authenticity and value as an artifact proving anything from the era of Jesus's advent. In reality, the conclusion that the ossuary is the "first proof" or "earliest evidence" or "only evidence" of Jesus dating to his purported era is a startling admission that there is, after 2,000 years, no unquestionable evidence of Jesus Christ's existence. Whenever some "artifact" or "evidence" of this sort appears, it is wise to express amazement that it has taken 2,000 years to find proof of Jesus, a demigod who supposedly shook up the world. Especially since he, as God Almighty, has purportedly been supernaturally in charge of everything. Since Jesus is claimed to be omnipotent, one would think that he would be able to prove himself and his existence on earth many times over. Yet, such is not the case, as this pitiful box, with its inconclusive inscription, is the only "proof" we have after two millennia. It's just not to be--it would not be smart to hold one's breath. The proof of a fictional character having lived on earth will simply never appear.

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Early Church Fathers on Mithraism: The Devil Got There First by D.M. Murdock/Acharya S

Why did the religion of Mithraism so bother the early Christians that they were compelled to write against it?

Mithrasrelief von Neuenheim, 2. Jhrdt . Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe (Photo: Thomas Ihle at de.wikipedia)
Mithra slays the bull, surrounded by other scenes from his life.

The early fathers of the Christian church discussed Mithraism's similarities to Christianity, unfavorably and with the intent to make it appear as if the prescient devil "aped" the coming Christ, based on interpretations of so-called "messianic prophecies" in the Old Testament. In other words, they essentially admitted that these similarities, parallels and correspondences between the religion and biography of the Perso-Roman god Mithra and the Jewish messiah Jesus existed before Christ supposedly lived, and that the Christian savior and religion were therefore unoriginal and not unique. 'Distorted from Prophecies'

Mithraism was so popular in the Roman Empire and so similar in important aspects to Christianity that several Church fathers were compelled to address it, disparagingly of course. For example, in his Dialogue with Trypho, patristic writer Justin Martyr (100-c. 165) acknowledged the mysteries of Mithra and claimed in chapter 70 that they were "distorted from the prophecies of Daniel and Isaiah":

And when those who record the mysteries of Mithras say that he was begotten of a rock, and call the place where those who believe in him are initiated a cave, do I not perceive here that the utterance of Daniel, that a stone without hands was cut out of a great mountain, has been imitated by them, and that they have attempted likewise to imitate the whole of Isaiah's words? (Roberts (1870), 2.186)

Justin Martyr Justin does not maintain that the Mithraic mysteries were copied from Christianity; his appeal to "prophecies" purportedly written centuries before is a tacit admission that Roman Mithraism, with rites already developed and known by his time, preceded Christianity. Martyr's suggestion also implies that the Mithraists knew the Jewish scriptures, which is improbable, unless those who created Mithraic rituals were Jews.

Even in the time of the emperor Vespasian, it was difficult, if not impossible, for a non-Jew (goy) to get his hands on the scriptures. In fact, it is alleged that one of the reasons for the befriending of the Jewish general and historian Josephus, as well as for the destruction of Jerusalem, was the emperor's desire to procure copies of the Jewish holy books or Torah. In the Talmud (Sanhedrin 59a), it is debated whether or not a goy who reads the Torah should be put to death. In any event, Martyr is clearly indicating that various Mithraic rituals preceded Christianity, in his attempted explanation that their existence was the result of "prophecies."

The Mithraic Eucharist

As regards the Eucharist in specific, Justin says in his First Apology (66):

And this food is called among us Eucharistia, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body"; and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood"; and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn. (Roberts (1885), 1.185)

As discussed elsewhere, the phrase "which are called Gospels" is evidently an interpolation, as it not only is extraneous and gratuitous to the subject matter of the rest of the paragraph but is also the only time the term "Gospels" is found in Justin's works. Furthermore, the quotes Justin cites from the "memoirs," which are ostensibly a single text called the "Memoirs of the Apostles" also discussed elsewhere, differ from any found in the canonical gospels. (In-depth analysis is provided in Supernatural Religion by Walter Cassels.)

In any case, Martyr implies here that this Mithraic sacrament preceded Christianity and was not copied from the latter, since the "devil did it" argument is generally, if not always, used to explain away the similarities between Christianity and pre-Christian Paganism. If human beings had merely copied Christian rites and myths, why would Martyr not say so but instead irrationally ascribe the deed to a supernatural agency, thus putting himself at risk for incredulity and ridicule for what is now nearly two thousand years?

In his discussion of the Eucharist, Justin also relates that the Mithraic mysteries involve bread and water, like the Christian communion, attributing its presence in Mithraism to "evil spirits":

...And this very solemnity, too, the evil spirits have introduced into the "Mysteries of Mithra"; for you do or may know that when anyone is initiated into this religion, bread and a cup of water, with a certain form of words, are made use of in the sacrifice. (Taylor, lxiii)

It should also be noted that within the Egyptian religion, dating back some 3,000 years before Christ's alleged advent, the partaking in the sacred meal of bread and beer was

germane to the salvational afterlife of the religious devotee. Such sacred meals could also be found in other pre-Christian cultures as well. Mithraism and Baptism, Resurrection, etc.

Church father TertullianAdditionally, in his book *The Prescription Against Heretics*, Church father Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225) acknowledges the similarities between Mithraism and Christianity, in their use of baptism, a mark upon the forehead, the resurrection, the crown, etc. Like Martyr, of course, he blames these similarities on the devil, rather than admitting that Christianity took them from Mithraism:

Chapter XL.-No Difference in the Spirit of Idolatry and of Heresy. In the Rites of Idolatry, Satan Imitated and Distorted the Divine Institutions of the Older Scriptures. The Christian Scriptures Corrupted by Him in the Perversions of the Various Heretics.

The question will arise, By whom is to be interpreted the sense of the passages which make for heresies? By the devil, of course, to whom pertain those wiles which pervert the truth, and who, by the mystic rites of his idols, vies even with the essential portions of the sacraments of God. He, too, baptizes somewhat, that is, his own believers and faithful followers; he promises the putting away of sins by a layer (of his own); and if my memory still serves me, Mithra there, (in the kingdom of Satan) sets his marks on the foreheads of his soldiers; celebrates also the oblation of bread, and introduces an image of a resurrection, and before a sword wreathes a crown. What also must we say to (Satan's) limiting his chief priest to a single marriage? He, too, has his virgins; he, too, has his proficients in continence. Suppose now we revolve in our minds the superstitions of Numa Pompilius, and consider his priestly offices and badges and privileges, his sacrificial services, too, and the instruments and vessels of the sacrifices themselves, and the curious rites of his expiations and vows: is it not clear to us that the devil imitated the well-known moroseness of the Jewish law? Since, therefore he has sown such emulation in his great aim of expressing, in the concerns of his idolatry, those very things of which consists the administration of Christ's sacraments, it follows, of course, that the same being, possessing still the same genius, both set his heart upon, and succeeded in, adapting to his profane and rival creed the very documents of divine things and of the Christian saints... (Roberts (1870), 15.48)

"Mithra there...sets his marks on the foreheads of his soldiers; celebrates also the oblation of bread, and introduces an image of a resurrection..."

Numa Pompilius, legendary king of RomeHere Tertullian is acknowledging the resemblances between Mithraism, Paganism in general, and Christianity, using as an example some rites also similar that date back to the purported time of the legendary Roman king Numa Pompilius (753-673 BCE), nearly eight centuries before the common era.

One Latin edition of Tertullian's "Mithra" remarks is as follows:

Tingit et ipse quosdam utique credentes et fideles suos; expositionem delictorum de lauacro repromittit, et si adhuc memini Mithrae, signat illic in frontibus milites suos.

Celebrat et panis oblationem et imaginem resurrectionis inducit et sub gladio redimit coronam.

The argument that this Mithraic commentary is a "gloss" may be a Christian apology, rather than scientific analysis.

Moreover, the Church father claims that these similarities were in imitation of the Jewish law, that Satan had "imitated and distorted the Divine Institutions" of the "Older Scriptures" or Torah. As stated, non-Jews could not readily know such things; hence, it must have been the apparently omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent devil, who is constantly getting the better of God!

In On Baptism (5), Tertullian describes baptism in the Roman Empire, but insists that it too is diabolical:

"Well, but the nations, who are strangers to all understanding of spiritual powers, ascribe to their idols the imbuing of waters with the self-same efficacy." (So they do) but they cheat themselves with waters which are widowed. For washing is the channel through which they are initiated into some sacred rites of some notorious Isis or Mithras. The gods themselves likewise they honour by washings. Moreover, by carrying water around, and sprinkling it, they everywhere expiate country-seats, houses, temples, and whole cities: at all events, at the Apollinarian and Eleusinian games they are baptized; and they presume that the effect of their doing that is their regeneration and the remission of the penalties due to their perjuries. Among the ancients, again, whoever had defiled himself with murder, was wont to go in quest of purifying waters. Therefore, if the mere nature of water, in that it is the appropriate material for washing away, leads men to flatter themselves with a belief in omens of purification, how much more truly will waters render that service through the authority of God, by whom all their nature has been constituted! If men think that water is endued with a medicinal virtue by religion, what religion is more effectual than that of the living God? Which fact being acknowledged, we recognise here also the zeal of the devil rivalling the things of God, while we find him, too, practising baptism in his subjects. (Roberts (1887), 3.671)

Obviously, this baptism, so extensively carried out, was the order of the day long before Christianity had any influence. Indeed, baptism is a pre-Christian rite, found from India to Egypt, dating back thousands of years. How, then, did Mithraism take it from Christianity?

Religious Mark on the Forehead

Another one of these devilish nuisances to Christian apologists is the Mithraic mark upon the forehead, a rite similar to that within Catholicism. In The Chaplet (De Corona), Tertullian comments on the "mimicry of martyrdom," as well as the crown and the mark of Mithraism, and says:

Let us take note of the devices of the devil, who is wont to ape some of God's things with no other design than, by the faithfulness of his servants, to put us to shame, and to condemn us. (Roberts (1887), 3.103)

The mark on the forehead as a sign of religious respect is well known to have been used in India for millennia. Even the Bible records the Jewish prophet Ezekiel (9:4) as marking the foreheads of the "righteous":

And the Lord said to him, "Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it."

Concerning this Jewish mark, ancient Christian monuments expert Rev. Dr. John P. Lundy states (128):

The cross was marked on the foreheads of the men of Jerusalem that were to be spared from destruction, in Ezekiel's time, for it was tau [T]; (9:4-6) it was stamped on valuable documents, coins, and on the necks of camels and thighs of horses; it was woven into garments; and in various other ways it was used before the Christian era as a symbol of ownership, of safety and of solemn compact.

Phoenician alphabet, c. 1050 BCEThe word for "mark" in Hebrew is מַחְסֵה or tav, reflecting the τ or tau of the Greeks. Both the Greek and Hebrew letters are derived from the Phoenician alphabet, in which the letter "t" is an "x."

Concerning the Jewish mark, the Catholic Encyclopedia ("Cross," 4.519) relates:

Thus the Greek letter (tau or thau) appears in Ezechiel (ix, 4), according to St. Jerome and other Fathers, as a solemn symbol of the Cross of Christ--"Mark Thau upon the foreheads of the men that sigh." The only other symbol of crucifixion indicated in the Old Testament is the brazen serpent in the Book of Numbers (xxi, 8-9). Christ Himself thus interpreted the passage: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John, iii, 14). The Psalmist predicts the piercing of the hands and the feet (Ps. xxi. 17).

Nevertheless, despite its presence in Judaism, in an article entitled "The Cult of Sol Invictus," a Protestant Christian website protests that the sign of the cross itself is Satanic, representing a Mithraic ritual that has erroneously found its way into Christianity:

After baptism into the Mysteries of Mithra, the initiate was marked on the forehead. The sign of the cross formed by the elliptic and the celestial equator was one of the signs of Mithra.

There is no Biblical support for the inclusion of Mithraic ritual, which is the worship of Satan, in the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Creator of heaven and earth. It is a Satanic scheme to disguise the transgression of Gods laws under the title of "Christianity."

While the writer wishes to denigrate all religions other than an imagined "pure

Christianity," he nonetheless clearly contends that Christianity, or Catholicism in specific, took from Mithraism, and not vice versa. Obviously, the cross would not have been copied by Paganism from Christianity, as it is an ancient sacred symbol that pre-dates the Christian era by centuries and millennia. In fact, the cross was the "universal symbol of life and immortality," as well as of the sun god, entirely appropriate for Mithra.

OrigenIn *Contra Celsum* (6.22), Church father Origen (184/185-253/254) quotes Celsus as relating the Mithraic mysteries, which included the soul's movements through the seven heavenly spheres. This celestial soul-cleansing "ladder" begins with the leaden Saturn and ends with the golden sun. The Persian theology, says Origen, also includes "musical realms." From Origen's condemnation of Celsus, it is evident that Celsus compared Mithraism with Judaism and Christianity, apparently accusing the latter two of copying the Persian religion. In book VI, Origen says:

For the mysteries of Mithras do not appear to be more famous among the Greeks than those of Eleusis, or than those in Aegina, where individuals are initiated in the rites of Hecate. But if he [Celsus] must introduce barbarian mysteries with their explanation, why not rather those of the Egyptians, which are highly regarded by many, or those of the Cappadocians regarding the Comanian Diana, or those of the Thracians, or even those of the Romans themselves, who initiate the noblest members of their senate? But if he deemed it inappropriate to institute a comparison with any of these, because they furnished no aid in the way of accusing Jews or Christians, why did it not also appear to him inappropriate to adduce the instance of the mysteries of Mithras? (Roberts (1885), 4.583)

Ironically, the prolific and highly influential Origen--considered one of the best educated of the early apologists--was later himself condemned as a "heretic"; yet, the church continued to use his writings to gain converts.

Another early Christian author who writes about the analogous elements found in both Paganism and Christianity, and attributes these resemblances to the devil, was Julius Firmicus Maternus (4th cent.). It is apparent from Firmicus's contentions in *De Errore profanarum religionum* (4) that he believed the mysteries to have been prefigured by the devil. In other words, they anticipated Christianity.

The bottom line is that Mithraism in one form or another existed for centuries prior to the common era and thus predated Christianity. The contention that many of the "biographical" details assigned to Jesus Christ in the New Testament represented attributes of older gods such as Mithra is verified by the protestations of the early Christian fathers that the "devil" anticipated the advent of Jesus Christ, as purportedly predicted in the Jewish scriptures, and caused the Pagans to mimic this Jewish messiah in their gods and goddesses.

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Mithra: The Pagan Christ
Was Mithra's Mother a Virgin?

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Isis the Chrēst
by D.M. Murdock/Acharya S

Is Jesus Christ truly a unique, divine revelation? Or is he one of many "Christs" and "Chrēsts" in antiquity? As "Jesus the Good" was called "Chrēstos," so too was the Egyptian goddess Isis.

The chi-rho or 'chrestomathy' mark was used to designate something 'good' or 'useful,' until it was taken over by Christianity and changed to represent 'christos' or 'anointed.'

In several instances in ancient times, the figure of "Jesus the Christ" is also called "Jesus the Chrēst" or "Jesus the Good," these two epithets, "Christos" and "Chrēstos," closely resembling each other and often confused by early Church fathers and others. As was the case with the title of Χριστός Christos, meaning "anointed," being held by various gods and other figures in the ancient world, so too was the epithet χρηστός Chrestos/Chrestus attached to several individuals, divine and otherwise. This fact that epithets traditionally associated with Jesus in reality were possessed by many others in antiquity is important to understand, as it demonstrates once again that the Christ character is neither unique nor representative of genuine divine revelation.

The Good God/dess

In Egypt for example, we find the common phrase neter nefer or "Good God," an epithet applied to Osiris as well as to the pharaohs, these latter of whom were considered divinities on Earth, incarnations of the god Horus. It is contended that, after the Greek-speaking Ptolemies began ruling Egypt or even before, with the introduction of Greek mysteries, Osiris and other Egyptian gods and goddesses were called chrestos.

In this regard, in Boeckh Corp. Inscr. (2:245, n. 2300) appears an inscription found on the Greek island of Delos that reads ΙΣΙΔΙ ΧΡΗΣΤΗ or "Isis Chreste":

Interestingly, Delos had a Therapeutan community, while Isis evidently was worshipped by the Judeo-Buddhist Therapeuts at Alexandria. (See my book Christ in Egypt, 440, 456.)

Along the same lines, in *The Foreigner: A Search for the First-Century Jesus* (77), Desmond Stewart says:

Chrestus (or in its Greek original, chrêstos) means gentle, kindly, good; it is, curiously, the equivalent of the common pharaonic title of Osiris, Un-nefer.

This epithet "Un-Nefer" or "Onnofri," etc., possesses the same basic meaning as chrestos; therefore, any Egyptian texts calling Osiris "Un-Nefer" when translated into Greek may have used the word chrestos.

Osiris the KRST

Christ in EgyptIt is significant that in Egyptian language the word for "tomb," "funeral," "dead body" or "mummy" is pronounced "krst" or "karest," similar to chrest and christ, especially when one considers that the initial hieroglyph for this word (N29) possesses a χ or chi sound. The last glyph in this word is the determinative Mummy determinative, Gardiner's A53 (A53), the standing mummy, which represents Osiris risen. (For more information, see my book *Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection*, 313-318)

This suggestion of Osiris as chrestos is given further support by the interesting discussion in a purported letter by Emperor Hadrian in which he claims that the Egyptian hybrid god Serapis ("Ausar-Apis") was worshipped by the "Chrestians."

In *Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus* (52), Dr. Arthur Drews presents this Hadrian-Servius letter as stating in part:

Those who worship Serapis are the Chrestians, and those who call themselves priests of Chrestus are devoted to Serapis. There is not a high-priest of the Jews, a Samaritan, or a priest of Chrestus who is not a mathematician, soothsayer, or quack. Even the patriarch, when he goes to Egypt, is compelled by some to worship Serapis, by others to worship Chrestus.

The Greek word chrestos was popular as an epithet or on epitaphs at various Egyptian funerary sites as at Alexandria and elsewhere. This fact too suggests that the Lord of the Underworld and Afterlife, Osiris, the Good God, like his wife, Isis Chreste, may have been likewise deemed Chrestos.

The Egyptian Houses of Goodness

The popular Egyptian term nfr or nefer, meaning "pleasant," "beautiful," "good," "excellent" and "gracious," comparable to chrestos, is designated by the hieroglyph of a cross (trachea) with a heart at the bottom (F35). Interestingly, this fascinating symbol, which looks like the sacred heart of Jesus, appears over Egyptian "Houses of Goodness" or "Houses of Chrest," so to speak, that resemble churches.

Further Reading

Sacred Heart of Jesus

Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection
Is Suetonius's Chresto a Reference to Jesus?
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Jesus in India?

The Myth of the Lost Years
by Acharya S/D.M. Murdock

Indian image of Jesus Christ Over the centuries, the claim has repeatedly been made that Jesus Christ not only walked the earth but also spent his early and post-crucifixion years in a variety of places, including Egypt, India, Great Britain, Japan and America. Indeed, traditions maintain that Jesus, the great godman of the West, lived, learned, loved and died in such places. Popular modern literature also purports that Jesus sired children, who then became the ancestors of various royal families of Europe, including France and/or elsewhere, depending on the author.

The allegation of Christ being a kingly progenitor is extremely convenient and useful for European royal families, obviously. Unfortunately for the European claimants, however, India also has a tradition that Jesus went there and likewise fathered children. So too does Shingo, Japan, allege that Jesus ended up there after the crucifixion, having children with a Japanese wife. Other tales depict Jesus "walking the Americas" or bopping about Glastonbury, England, with his "uncle," Joseph of Arimathea. Not all of these tales can be true, obviously, unless Jesus is polymorphous and phantasmagoric, a perspective that in reality represents that of the mythologist or mythicist. To wit, regardless of these fables, or, rather, because of them, the most reasonable conclusion regarding Jesus and where he may or may not have been is that he is a mythical character, not a historical personage who trotted the globe.

The Groovy Guru

Jesus Christ in India image According to legend, Jesus, the great Jewish sage, spent his "lost years," from between the ages of around 12 to 28 or 30, in India, where, per another tradition, he also escaped after surviving the crucifixion. The Jesus-was-a-guru tale was popularized over a century ago by the Russian traveler Nicholas Notovitch. Notovitch asserted that in 1887, while at the secluded Hemis or Himis monastery in

Ladakh/Tibet, he was shown a manuscript which discussed the "unknown life" of Jesus, or "Issa," as he was supposedly called in the East. This "Issa" text, translated for Notovitch from Tibetan by a monk/lama, alleged that during his "lost years" Jesus was educated by yogis in India, Nepal and "the Himalaya Mountains."

Stating that he felt the manuscript to be "true and genuine," Notovitch maintained its contents were written "immediately after the Resurrection," while the manuscript itself purportedly dated from the third century of the Common Era. Notovitch related that the "two manuscripts" he was shown at Himis were "compiled from diverse copies written in the Thibetan tongue, translated from rolls belonging to the Lassa library and brought from India, Nepal, and Maghada 200 years after Christ." (Notovitch, 44)

Notovitch's story was challenged by a number of people, which served to popularize it further. Noted Sanskrit scholar Max Müller came down hard on Notovitch, concluding that either the Russian had never gone to Tibet in the first place, and had concocted the Jesus story, or that waggish Buddhist monks had played a trick on Notovitch, as Indian priests had done in a notorious instance concerning the Asiatic Research Society's Colonel Wilford. Others subsequently journeyed to Himis/Hemis and witnessed repeated denial by the lamas that Notovitch had ever been there or that any such manuscript existed. In 1922, Indian scholar and swami Abhenanda eventually determined for himself by visiting Himis, gaining the confidence of the lamas and having the manuscript revealed to him. Other visitors to Himis, such as mystic Nicholas Roerich, verified the same story. Aspects of Notovitch's story checked out, and he apparently did indeed stay at Himis and was shown a manuscript relating to "Issa."

Nicholas NotovitchNotovitch claimed that Indian merchants brought the account of "Jesus" to Himis, and that they had actually witnessed the crucifixion. Indeed, the text begins with "This is what is related on this subject by the merchants who come from Israel," reflecting not that "Jesus" lived in India but that the Jesus tradition was brought to India and Tibet. (Notovitch, 32) Notovitch's text also did not state that Jesus was specifically at Himis: In fact, the lama stated that the Issa scrolls "were brought from India to Nepal, and from Nepal to Thibet." Yet, upon returning to Himis through later visitors, the story eventually became morphed into "Your Jesus was here," meaning at Himis itself. The "one book" or "two manuscripts" became "three books," which were displayed for the later visitors, with the implication that there was more to the tale.

Although subsequent visitors were presented such texts, none but Nicholas Roerich's son, George, could read them. By his translation, Roerich was evidently shown the same text as Notovitch. Thus, it appears that there was only one text at Himis, and that it did not state that Issa himself was ever at the monastery. Furthermore, that one text is based on hearsay provided by passing merchants and does not at all represent an "eyewitness" account of "Jesus" in India and Tibet, although the impression is given that this and other texts do constitute such records.

Also, Notovitch asked if "Issa" was reputed to be a saint, and was informed that "the people ignore his very existence" and that the lamas who have studied the scrolls "alone know of him." These remarks are a far cry from Roerich's claim that the tale of

"Christ" in India and other parts of Asia was to be found widespread. They also contradict the Tibetan text's own assertion that Issa's "fame spread everywhere" and that Persia and surrounding countries "resounded with prophecies" of Issa, thus causing the Persian priesthood to be terrified of him. This latter element sounds like typical mythmaking, especially since there were similar prophecies of godmen for centuries, if not millennia, prior to Christ's purported advent, particularly in India.

Moreover, the "originals" of the scrolls housed at the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, were composed in Pali, while the Himis library contained one copy in Tibetan. Yet, the Tibetan alphabet was developed by the king who "reigned in the days of Mohammed"; hence, nothing could have been written in Tibetan prior to the 7th century. Although older texts were composed in Sanskrit or Pali, it is clear that the actual physical manuscript revealed to Notovitch could not have existed before the 7th century. In fact, it would appear that very few Tibetan texts date to before the 9th century. In any event, the manuscript itself certainly did not date from the third century, although it could represent tradition transmitted over the centuries.

While Notovitch claimed the Issa story dated to shortly after "the Resurrection," in it there is no mention of the resurrection, and the tale ends with Issa's death. In this regard, the text depicts the "Jews," whom it calls "Israelites," in a favorable light, and is "the only [manuscript] ever to charge the Romans ["pagans"] solely for Jesus' execution." Unlike others, this account does not have Jesus being resuscitated and then returning to India, to father children and live a long life.

Notovitch's modern editor, Frank Muccie, relates that the manuscript states, "Pilate is responsible for removing Jesus' body from the tomb," noting that this development somehow does not "mean the resurrection hope is invalid." He then says:

"By the third century A.D., there were no fewer than 25 different versions of Jesus' death and resurrection! Some have him not being put to death at all, some have him revived back to life, and some have Jesus living on to old age and dying in Egypt!" (Notovitch, 6)

Obviously, not all of these 25 or more accounts can be "true and genuine," and such a development casts doubt on the historicity of one and all.

The Rozabal Tomb

Rozabal tomb Kashmir

Moreover, it is interesting that Notovitch spent six days in the "Vale of Kashmir," in its capital, Srinagar, "city of the sun," where the purported tomb of "Jesus," the wandering prophet Yuz Asaf, is shown to tourists. Yet, the Russian traveler apparently never heard of the tomb, known as the "Roza Bal" or "Rauzabal" shrine, as he does not mention it in his writings concerning the Tibetan text, where its inclusion certainly would have been judicious in demonstrating that Jesus lived in India! Perhaps, however, as a believing Christian Notovitch ignored this tale, much as the devout do today and much as skeptics may do with other fables concerning Christ.

Roza Bal footprints Possessing the priestly touch of sculpted footprints "with nail marks" over the grave, the Roza Bal shrine may seem convincing to the uninitiated, who are unaware of the world's well-developed priestcraft. This "artifact" is another in a long line of so-called relics, like the 20+ shrouds or the multiple foreskins of Christ. In reality, there were many "footprints of the gods" in ancient times--and a number of Indian gods are depicted with nail holes in their feet.

Also, "Yuz Asaf" is not equivalent to "Jesus" but to "Joseph," which was often a title of a priest and not a name. In fact, Eastern scholars such as Dr. S. Radhakrishnan state that the name "Joseph" or "Joasaph" is "derived from Bodhisattva, the technical name for one destined to obtain the dignity of a Buddha." (Prajnanananda, 107) Thus, this tomb of a Bodhisattva could belong to any of thousands of such holy men. In like regard, the purported graves of "Jesus" and "his brother" in Japan are in reality those of a 16th-century Christian missionary and his brother.

The legends regarding Jesus's tomb in Srinagar, and that of the Virgin Mary in Kashgar, are apparently of Islamic origin, emanating largely from the "heretical" Ahmadiyya sect. Such a creation would serve a couple of purposes: 1. That, as asserted in the Koran, Jesus was not the "son of God" but a mortal prophet, whose body was buried in Kashmir; and 2. that some presumably Moslem people are his descendants.

Proponents of the Jesus-in-India theory hold up a number of other texts and artifacts they maintain "prove" not only Jesus's existence on Earth but also his presence in India. When such texts and artifacts are closely examined, they serve as no evidence at all, except of priestcraft. With one or two possible exceptions originating to a few centuries earlier, the Eastern texts regarding "Issa" seem to be late writings, some dating to the 15th and 18th centuries, based on traditions, not eyewitness accounts. Some of the "documents" are obviously fictitious, and others are downright ridiculous, such as the Bhavishya Mahapurana. A number of these texts merely relate the basic gospel story with embellishments depending on what the storyteller is attempting to accomplish. Buddhist Propaganda or Christian Proselytizing?

Tibetan Buddhist holding scrolls Although some of the writings appear to be of Hindu origin, the attack by "Issa" on the Vedas and Brahmins, as in the Notovitch text, represents Buddhist propaganda. It appears that Buddhists were trying to demonstrate that Jesus, the great wise man of the West, was influenced by Buddhism, even having been taught by "Buddha," an eternal disincarnate entity. In this regard, the Notovitch text states, "Six years later, Issa, whom the Buddha had chosen to spread his holy word, could perfectly explain the sacred rolls." (Notovitch, 35) In this way, Buddha usurps Jesus, becoming the Jewish teacher's guru.

That the text has been used as propaganda to raise Buddha and Buddhism over Christ and Christianity is further validated by Notovitch's foreword, in which he related that the lama told him, "The only error of the Christians is that after adopting the great doctrine of Buddha, they, at the very outset, completely separated themselves from him and created another Dalai-Lama..." This "Dalai-Lama," the monk subsequently informed the Russian, is the Pope. Concerning Christ, the lama continued, "Buddha did, indeed,

incarnate himself with his intelligence in the sacred person of Issa, who, without the aid of fire and sword, went forth to propagate our great and true religion through the entire world." (Notovitch, 20) Hence, Eastern traditions regarding Jesus are designed to show that Jesus is Buddha and that Christianity is an offshoot of ancient Eastern wisdom.

Nevertheless, the Notovitch text itself may have been composed originally by proselytizing Christians who attempted to use the natives' belief in Buddha in order to increase Christ's stature. These missionaries may have been appealing to women to follow "Issa," as the text puts great emphasis on women, whose status in India and elsewhere has been abysmally low. The text would also appeal to the Sudras or Pariahs, since it has Issa preaching on their behalf. These groups are targeted to this day by Christian missionaries in India.

Considering that many missionaries, travelers and scholars have been keenly aware of the numerous and profound similarities between the Tibetan and Catholic religions, it would not be surprising if this Issa fable were created in order to show that the Tibetan religion is merely a foreign derivative of the "true universal religion," i.e., Catholicism. The resemblances between various Indian sects and Christianity likewise led to tales about the Christian missionaries Thomas, Bartholomew and Pantaenus also proselytizing in India. Like the Jesus-in-India myth, there are other explanations for the resemblances, which are addressed in detail in my book *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled*. In short, the major explanation is that the "Christian" religion and savior were already in India long before the alleged advent of Jesus.

Is "Issa" Jesus - or Shiva?

By calling Issa "Jesus" or "Christ," modern writers have cemented in the readers' minds that the correlation is absolute, an erroneous conclusion. In reality, the name "Issa," "Isa" or "Isha" is a title and simply means "lord," "god" or "master," often referring to the Indian god Lord Shiva: "'Isha' or 'the Lord' is another name of Siva..." (Prajnanananda, 19) Furthermore, Prof. Nunos de Santos says, "...a god variously named Issa, Isha, Ichtos, Iesus, Ieshuah, Joshuah, Jesus, etc., is indisputably originally from India." He also states, "Ishvara (Ishwar) is widely worshipped in the Far East, being also called Isha (or Ishana) in India, Issara in Pali, Isuan in Thai, Jizu (or Jizai) in Japanese, and so on."

Chandra Hindu Moon God image "Isa" is likewise another name for Chandra, the Indian moon god, as well as for Shiva's Egyptian counterpart, the soli-lunar god Osiris, also called Iswara in India:

"Iswara, or Isa, and Isani, or Isisi, are... unquestionably the Osiris and Isis of Egypt. Iswara, Siva, or Hara (for these are his names among nearly a thousand more) united with Isi, represent the secondary causes, whatever they may be, of natural phenomena; and principally those of temporary destruction and regeneration." (Moor, 151)

Numerous ancient legends, recorded for example in the writings of Diodorus Siculus during the first century BCE, depict Osiris as traveling all over the East, as well as the rest of the world, during the millennia when he reigned as Egypt's favorite deity. Osiris,

or Isa, it should be noted, was put to death and resurrected, among many other correspondences to the Christ myth. Osiris/Isa too had a number of tombs in various places, especially in Egypt but likely also in India. However, Osiris was not a "real person" but a fertility and sun god. What mythologists recognize is that it was not a "historical Osiris" but his myth that made it to India and diverse places. As in the case of Osiris, the same phenomenon occurred regarding "Jesus," who is, in the end, a remake of Osiris, among others.

The title "Isa" or "Issa" could apply to others, and is a common name even today. Indeed, some part of these Jesus-in-India tales may revolve around the famed Greek sage Apollonius of Tyana. Not a few persons over the centuries have noted the similarities between the lives of Apollonius and Christ, and even in ancient times Christians were accused of plagiarizing the Apollonius legend.

The Nestorians

Nestorian Mongolian Bishop imageThe Issa myth apparently represents a Christianization of legends regarding Osiris, Shiva, Apollonius and other gods and "Bodhisattvas," by the Nestorians, an early Christian sect who lived in India and elsewhere, and may well have spread the syncretistic fable to other Asian ports of call. Indeed, Nicholas Roerich himself surmised that the ancient Nestorian sect spread the tales in the East:

"We heard several versions of this legend which has spread widely through Ladak, Sinkiang and Mongolia, but all versions agree on one point, that during His absence, Christ was in India and Asia.... Perhaps [this legend] is of Nestorian origin." (Prophet, 261)

Roerich also stated, "Whoever doubts too completely that such legends about the Christ life exist in Asia, probably does not realize what an immense influence the Nestorians have had in all parts of Asia and how many so-called Apocryphal legends they spread in the most ancient times." (Roerich, 89) In addition, George Roerich even proposed that there was a "floating colony" of Nestorians in Ladakh itself "during the eighth to tenth centuries," which could well be when the Notovitch text was composed. Roerich, one of the main writers whose works have led to the Jesus-in-India theory, almost invariably and misleadingly substitutes "Jesus" or "Christ" for "Issa," when Issa could be a number of individuals, mythical and historical.

In his account of Jesus in India, Roerich declared, "The teachings of India were famed far and wide; let us even recall the description of the life of Appolonius [sic] of Tyana and his visits to Hindu sages." (Roerich, 119) Again, one likely scenario regarding "Issa" ("Lord" or "Master") is that, whatever part of his tale is "historical," it possibly refers to Apollonius.

Pre-Christian Indo-European Interaction

As is well known, Apollonius was not alone in his journeys to the East. Decades and centuries prior to the Christian era, there was much intercourse between India and the West, including the famous journey by Pythagoras and the Alexandrian incursion. As

another pertinent example, one of the seats of Mandeism, a Christian baptist sect, was Maisan, a Mesopotamian city colonized by Indians. As Dr. Rudolph Otto relates:

"...Indian caravans passed through Maisan and likewise Nabatea. Indian merchants, wherever they went, were importers and missionaries of Indian ideas. There need be no surprise therefore if direct Indian imports are found in the syncretistic medley of Mandeian Gnosis". (Prajnanananda, 41)

Space does not permit us to recount the numerous authorities who are in agreement as to the westward spread of Indian and Buddhist concepts centuries before and into the Christian era. A number of them may be found in Prajnanananda's book, including a "Mr. Cust," who evinced that trade between India and Yemen "was established not later than 1000 B.C." Yemen is very close to Israel, and by the first century CE there were plenty of Indians in the Roman Empire.

Despite the popularity of the Jesus-in-India tale, the claim is not accepted by mainstream authorities, either Christian or secular. The tale's proponents assert that scholars reject Jesus in India because of Western imperialism and the inability to accept that Christ could have been influenced by Buddhism. In the case of mythicists, however, the reason Jesus is denied as having gone to India is because he is a pagan sun god remade into a Jewish "human" messiah. Thus, it is not a question of a "historical Jesus" being in India and the East but of a variety of solar cults that worshipped a similar deity with similar rituals, doctrines and myths.

The "Lost Years" Are Astrotheological

Jesus as the Sun throughout History Over the centuries Jesus's so-called "lost years" and post-crucifixion life have provided much fodder for the fertile human imagination, leading to speculation, legends, traditions and myths that the great godman and sage lived and studied in a variety of places. Once the fable of Christ became popular, numerous towns, villages, cities and nations wished to establish some sort of connection. Instead of recognizing that such a significant omission as Jesus's "lost years" is an indication of the mythical nature of the tale, individuals using typical priestcraft have come up with countless extraordinary adventures of the "historical Jesus." Unfortunately for the believers, however, not only is the gospel story itself but so too are these Jesus-the-Globetrotter tales mere deluding smoke and mirrors, and the reason for the gap in Jesus's biography is because he was not a "real person" but a pagan sun god turned into a Jewish messiah. In the mythos revolving around the sun god, there need be no accounting for "lost years," as the "age" of 12 represents the sun at high noon, while the 28 or 30 represents the days of the lunar or solar months, respectively.

When religions are investigated with a profound knowledge of mythology, the correspondences are clearly revealed, and it becomes evident that it is not the case that this miracleworker or that godman traveled to this place or that, as has been rumored to have occurred with just about every god or goddess. In actuality, it is the legends, traditions and myths concerning these gods, godmen or gurus that have been spread far and wide by their proponents, priests and propagandists. As was the case with the

missionary and his brother in Japan, who were taken for the object of worship they were proselytizing, so has it developed in other parts of the world over the millennia concerning not only Jesus but also many other deities, such as the virgin-born, crucified Mexican god Quetzalcoatl, whose similar "life" and religion led to claims that "Jesus" was in America. The reason for the similarities, however, is because both Jesus and Quetzalcoatl are sun gods with the same attendant holidays and practices.

In the final analysis, it is not possible that Jesus could have lived years after the crucifixion, fathered children and died in several different places, as legends represent. The past explanation for such discrepancies has been metaphysical, deeming Jesus to be multidimensional and capable of simultaneous incarnations in various locations. Such an explanation, of course, will not satisfy the skeptic and scientist. Or the mythologist, who simply knows better, because she or he has studied in depth the products of the human mind. Because the basic story of Christ revolves around the sun, which was highly esteemed the world over beginning many millennia ago, the myth is likewise found around the globe. To the basic mythos and ritual were added various embellishments according to the place and era, and for a variety of reasons. In the end, Jesus the Globetrotter is a not a historical personage who magically appeared all over the world, bi-locating and flying on the backs of birds. "Jesus Christ" is mythical creature, to be found globally only between the pages of a book.

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[29-04-2023] The true origins of Jesus. The myth behind the man

A popular introduction to the Jesus myth - The true origins of Jesus - was released on the 1st of January 2023 and is available for purchase on Amazon.

[26-09-2022] New article by prof. Michael Lockwood: "Naming the Gnostic Mary".

The article contains an essay - Mary, Martha, and Amra; Buddhist sources of Luke 10:38-42 - by my late father, dr. Christian Lindtner, and is available on prof. Lockwood's academia profile and here.

[10-05-2022] Interviews omkring bogen: "Hemmeligheden om Kristus"

Medie1.dk har foretaget tre interviews med cand. mag. Klara Preben-Hansen og cand. merc fil. Niels Jørgen Lindtner i forbindelse med udgivelse af bogen: "Hemmeligheden om Kristus". De tre interviews kan ses ved at følge linket nedenfor. Bogen kan erhverves hos diverse internetboglader, f.eks. hos saxo.com.

medie1.dk/prd059dk.htm

[19-03-2022] Old wine in new wineskins

I am content to inform the readers, that on December 9th this year Geoff Roberts' book Jesus 888 will be re-released on the English book market. The publication carries the new title: The True Origins of Jesus, and will be published by John Hunt Publishing.

As the Danish translator of this book - I recommend it to all people interested in mythicism as a very good popular introduction to the subject.

To preorder the book, click here.

[08-02-2022] Boganmeldelser

Er man interesseret i at anmelde bogen "Hemmeligheden om Kristus" er man velkommen til at skrive til Niels Jørgen Lindtner på e-mail: njlindtner@hotmail.com og der vil så blive arrangeret at man modtager et anmeldereksemplar.

Her følger to anmeldelser af bogen. Én af Bitten-Kirsti Nielsen og én af Dorte Stangholm Jakobsen:

Af Dorte Stangholm Jakobsen:

Forfatteren Christian Lindtner døde i november 2020, og er begravet på Søllerød kirkegård. Christian Lindtner blev født i 1949. Hans uddannelse omfattede klassiske og orientalske sprog, klassisk og orientalsk filosofi og religionshistorie. I 1983 tog C. Lindtner en doktorgrad i buddhistisk filologi, og hans afhandling om den indiske filosof Nâgârjuna er blevet offentliggjort i flere bøger på dansk om buddhismen. Christian Lindtner var en yndet foredragsholder og er verdenskendt for sin enorme viden om buddhisme.

Grundlæggende var Christian Lindtner altid på udkig efter den ultimative sandhed, og hans forskningsarbejde er omfattende og hans udgivelse af hemmeligheden om Kristus må give stof til eftertanke blandt alle mennesker med interesse for religion og filosofi. Udgivelsen vil med garanti også kunne opfattes som en provokation, eller som Niels Jørgen Lindtner beskriver det; "som en bombe under den vestlige verdens selvforståelse".

Romanen er på 273 sider. Bogen starter med et forord af Niels Jørgen Lindtner, herefter et forord af Christian Lindtner inden bogen i de efterfølgende kapitler frem til side 155 fremlægger forskningen. Fra side 157 og frem kommer der diverse tillæg, som beskriver navne og titler, lokaliteter, bogstaver, tal, ting og begreber mv. som er nødvendig baggrundsviden for den dataorienterede læser. Bogen afsluttes med to appendikser.

Skrifttypen er lille, og umiddelbart kan bogen virke tung at komme igennem, men sproget er let læseligt, stort, historisk, og nuanceret. Når det er sagt, så er teksten også på et højt niveau og med faglig tyngde.

Den sproglige variation og bogens indhold er interessant og gør læseoplevelsen intens. Forfatterens vid gør, at stoffet kan være vanskeligt at få fat i, idet forfatteren kommer så langt ud i hjørnerne og går så meget i dybden teoretisk og sprogligt at bogen helt automatisk fordre koncentration og fokus fra læseren.

Særlig interessant er temaet og budskaberne i hvert enkelt kapitel. Den største kunstneriske styrke ligger i forfatterens brug af sproglig variation, som muliggør tekstforståelse på en let og elegant måde. Med sætninger som; "Kristendommen er buddhistisk propaganda", "De fire evangelier er.... nøjagtige kopier af de gamle

buddhistiske sūtraer..”og ” ... For at forstå kristendommen må man kende buddhismen. Man forstår nemlig først en kopi, når man kender originalen” er der ingen tvivl om at nogle læsere vil betragte bogen som en provokation.

Spørgsmålet er om ikke det i virkeligheden er netop det, som Christian Lindtner søgte? En provokation giver eftertanke og en eftertanke giver refleksioner og en refleksion synliggør nuancerne.

Uanset religiøs retning handler filosofiens væsen vel netop om at skabe refleksion, dialog og bevidsthed omkring verdens opfattelser af sandheder?
Min anbefaling

En fremragende bog, som efterlader læseren med mange spørgsmål og refleksioner omkring egen og ikke mindst verdens selvforståelse. Jeg sidder som anmelder tilbage med en fornemmelse af, at her sidder jeg med et mesterværk, en velbevaret hemmelighed, som jeg har fået indblik i. En alternativ måde at forstå verden på, og jeg opfatter bogen som skelsættende på mange måder.

Bogen er højaktuel netop nu, hvor der i en kompleks verden er øget fokus på selvforståelse, religion og filosofi. Bogen vil uden tvivl blive opfattet som en provokation i nogle kredse, men måske er det faktisk hensigtsmæssigt engang imellem at blive rystet lidt ud af kurs? I hvert fald er vi som mennesker nødt til at forholde os til konkrete fakta.

Denne anmeldelse blev først bragt på: Hemmeligheden om Kristus - Christian Lindtner
» Din Boganmelder

Af Bitten-Kirsti Nielsen

Kristendommen er en tro kopi af Buddhismen, og Det Nye Testamente, som Kristendommen jo bygger på, har sit udspring i buddhistiske tekster, som buddhistiske munke udbredte. Det er det tema, som religionsforskeren Christian Lindtner her forsvare.

Jamen er Jesus da kun en myte? Det mener bogens forfatter, ja selv eksistensen af den historiske Jesus afvises.

Hvad så med Kristendommen, som hele den vestlige kultur hviler på og nærmere Det Nye Testamente, hvis tekster der prædikes over i Folkekirken, spørger jeg undrende, mens jeg læser videre. Sorry, er svaret fra bogen. Det Nye Testamente er hentet direkte fra de buddhistiske originalskrifter og er en efterligning af Buddhas testamente. Det betyder dermed, at Jesu livsforløb er en kopi af legenden om Buddha, født 500 år f.Kr., der var en "ksatriyas" (på græsk khristos), en adelsmand, en kronprins, hvis opvågning til Dharma (retfærdighed) bliver oversat til Jesu dåb, som også her finder retfærdigheden.

Buddha-barnet, der fødtes i en lotus, blev sendt til jorden i et vindpust (læs Helligånden) fra Brahmas himmel. Buddha, der omtaler sig selv som profet, indtager et sidste måltid med sine munke og dør mellem to træer og indgår i Nirvana. Jesus dør på et kors mellem to andre personer og stiger derefter til himmels.

At der er tale om kopiarbejde, understøttes af de utallige navne på personer og steder, som går igen og genkendes let med en lille omskrivning. Ja selv kalkmalerierne i de ældste kirker har motiver, som oprindeligt er buddhistiske, skriver forfatteren.

Et af Mahâyâna buddhismens mest kendte evangelier er Sad-harma-pundarika-sûtra, der nævnes som hovedkilden til Matthæusevangeliet. Den siges at skulle være en yngre, mere folkelig udgave af Buddhismen henvendt til jøderne. I denne sutra er der mange små lotus-sønner eller pundarikaer, der flyver omkring. Også Jesus var en pundarika (= søn af), og Lindtner forklarer her, hvordan han ved brug af buddhistisk-kristen geometri når frem til, at Buddha og Jesus var sol-sønner og delte livsforløb.

Saddharma-pundarika-sûtraen beskrives som en slags skuespil, et eventyr med mange fortællinger, hvor den store helt i skuespillet er Tathâgatas. Det er en kærlig far, og hans børn er disciplene, som han spreder Dharma dråber ud over. Troen på ham kan helbrede for sygdom og frelse fra al elendighed, og så lever han evigt

Buddha, der har mange navne, omtaler ofte sig selv som Tathâgatas. Men også Jesus er en tanhâgâtas, og begge har de en ufattelig visdom, som ingen kan fatte, og som derfor er hemmelig.

Lotusevangeliet handler især om Tathâgatas. Han optræder i utallige roller på utallige steder og i flere forklædninger. Om Tathâtagatas skal det siges, at sutraen, som han sad i, da han ankom i et vindpust, er vigtig for den, som bærer den, for han bærer Tathâgatas legeme, den evige udødelige.

For Buddha er livet en lidelse ud fra den dobbelte erfaring, at alt er forgængeligt, men at der samtidig findes en uforgængelig virkelighed eller bevidsthedstilstand. Sjælen eller jeg'et er en midlertidig kombination af karma og de elementer, som alt i verden er opbygget af. Hos begge religioner er der derfor en form for liv efter døden. så mens Jesus farer til himmels for senere at komme igen, tror Buddha på karma og genfødsel.

En interessant historie at dykke ned i, men for at forstå Kristendommen må vi kende Buddhismen. Man forstår nemlig først kopien, når man kender originalen, skriver Lindtner.

Nu kom Christian Lindtner jo ikke sovende til den erkendelse, idet han som religionsforsker i mere end 30 år havde studeret de buddhistiske skrifter og med denne bog ønskede at fremstille sine resultater i deres logiske sammenhæng.

Der er fire evangelier, og fire evangelister, som har været involveret i omtalte kopiering, hvor Matthæus menes at være den første med at hente stof fra Buddhismen. Markus og Johannes tog også del, men sammenligner man de fire evangelier med den

buddhistiske original, er Matthæus den, som kommer tættest på originalen, får vi her at vide.

Matthæus, der har stået bag en stor del – måske den største – af arbejdet med at sammenligne og kopiere fra de buddhistiske skrifter til Det Nye Testamente, har anvendt en højst snedig og fascinerende teknik, som Lindtner bruger en stor del af bogen på at forklare. For at nærme os de buddhistiske rødder må vi gøre brug af begrebet matria, som rigtigt nok er beslægtet med ordet geometri. Her bliver bogen for alvor spændende både for matematikere og for en sprognørd som mig. Der handler om en fantasifuld fortolkningsmetode, som vandt udbredelse ca 200 år e.Kr.

Teknikken gik ud på at benytte sig af lyd- og talværdier ved sammenligningen mellem græsk og sanskrit, og der gives talrige eksempler i bogen. Men det handler også om geometriske tegninger, ved hvis hjælp forfatteren når frem til figurer, der kan løse gåder f.eks. om korset eller om den mere spøjse, der handler om hvordan Maria foruden at være moder også kunne være jomfru på samme tid. Problemet løser matematikken.

Det er ikke helt let læsning, men underholdningsværdien mangler ikke. Lad os tage nogle eksempler på tal- og lydværdier.

I Det Nye Testamente må ophavsmændene have tillagt Buddha nogle bestemte grundtal, og efter lidt brøkgregning og sammentælling når vi frem til Buddhas tal, som er $2 \cdot 400 \cdot 9 \cdot 1 \cdot 200 = 612$ (dd tæller en dental konsonant). Alt har talværdier, og de er meget vigtige for forståelsen af baggrunden for Lindtners tese.

Personer trækkes direkte ud af Buddha teksterne og over i Det Nye Testamente. Som Buddha gjorde det, helbredte og vækkede Jesus også folk op fra døden. Sanskrit for død er narakas = n-k-r-s, og på græsk er det nekros = n-k-r-s. At de passer tal- og lydmæssigt er afgørende for studiet af de mange efterligninger, som bogen vrimer med.

I Matthæus 8:2 helbreder Jesus hele fire grupper af vanføre, lamme, blinde, stumme. Man ser, at sanskrit kula-putras er blevet til græsk paralutikos (at være besat). Både i lyd- og talværdi passer de to ord: k-l-p-t-r-s = p-r-l-t-k-s.

Om de døde og om helvede siges i øvrigt intet i evangelierne, som ikke er sagt i de buddhistiske skrifter.

Men ud over at fordybe os i lyd- og talværdier er der også adskillige andre sammenfald på navnene. Jesus kaldes Davis søn, på sanskrit devas putras. Jesus er også søn af Abraham. Buddhabarnet, Bodhisattvas, som kom ned fra himlen, var søn af Brahma. Kopieringen er igen tydelig. Og så var der kvinden i Jesu liv.

Hun hed Âmra-Pâli og ville besøge Tathâgatas, og hun var meget dejlig. Derfor blev munkene usikre på, om de ville blive fristet, og de bad en bøn, som skulle komme til at danne grundlag for bønneren "Fader vor ... led os ikke i fristelse ..". Hun indbød altså Tathâgatas til middag, shinede sig omhyggeligt op og gjorde sig stor umage med

arrangementet. (Hvordan mon det endte?)

Lidt anderledes med skøgen, der opsøgte Jesus. Hun var vist mere beskeden, men hældte dråber af kostbar olie ud over hans hoved. Begge anbragte de sig derefter ved mesterens fødder.

Lukas omtaler hende, der kom til Jesus, som kvinden, gunaika på græsk og kvinden hos Tathâgatas på sanskrit hed ganikâ. g-n-k og g-n-k. (kâ i ganikâ er et spørgende stedord og skal ikke med). Og vi glædes endnu en gang over at det hele passer.

Bogen er rig på paralleler i beskrivelsen af Buddha og Jesus, deres gang på jorden og deres handlinger, hvis slående lighed ikke er til at overse. Det måtte selvfølgelig vække til eftertanke hos nogle og til stor fortrydelse hos andre ikke mindst teologerne, der må føle sig truet på deres brød. Det kom der også en del skænderier ud af, for i sine kommentarer til diverse meningsmodstandere trækker Lindtner overtroen skarpt op.

Her står vi så og ser på alt det fantastiske, Kristendommen har lagt navn til. De smukke historier, kunsten, den storslåede musik, salmerne og den trøstende Gud. Nogle vil måske sige, lad gå, Jesus var en Buddha, mens andre vil trøste sig med, at intet fjerner den guddommelige kraft og energi, som findes i livet – eller bagom livet. Kristendommen kan ses som en gave – en juvel. Så Matthæus var nok ikke helt dum.

Lindtners sensationelle afsløring skete i tavshed, skriver han ærgerligt, og han tilføjer, at "Høsten er stor, men arbejderne få". Tja, men måske er tiden ikke inde. Er det ikke sådan, at tingene sker, når tiden er til det?

Lindtner anlagde en dristig vinkel her, og i bogens sidste tredjedel gengiver forfatteren en række kommentarer i form af læserbreve og kritik af den sovende folkekirke, der ikke ønsker at se det absurde i jomfrufødsel og himmelfart. Nå ikke? Men sig os så lige, hvor i himlen Jesus sidder ved sin faders højre hånd. Har nogen været ude i rummet for at se efter?

Naturligvis blev der rabalder med både universitet og præsteskab. Og dog var Lindtner ikke i tvivl om, at hans tese måtte vinde indpas en dag.

Problemet for mig, der skriver dette her, er, om tidspunktet er det bedste lige nu til at gøre Kristendommen til en smuk fortælling og måske derved lade pladsen vige for Islam. Det får mig til at gyse, og det ville jeg gerne have talt med Christian Lindtner om, men det nåede jeg ikke.

Christian Lindtner døde i november 2020.

Bogen er netop udkommet på Rostras Forlag

Denne anmeldelse blev først bragt på: Hemmeligheden om Kristus « Snaphanen.dk

Opdatering d. 19-03-2022: Her følger en boganmeldelse af Hemmeligheden om Kristus

forfattet af Aksel Madum. Først bragt på Facebook i gruppen "Boganmeldelser":

Ualmindelig bog. At Jesus aldrig skulle have eksisteret er tidligere blevet luftet, fx. af GEORG BRANDES i SAGNET OM JESUS, men et gennemgribende angreb på hele kristendommen og dens kilder, så der stort set ikke er nogen originalitet tilbage, men alt er efterligning af buddhismen og dens kilder og myter, det har jeg ikke set før – og så er det vanskeligt for nogen at opponere imod den saglighed, der ligger til grund, da der næppe er nogen, i hvert fald kun ganske få, nulevende danskere med den sprogkompetence, CHRISTIAN LINDTNER havde.

Hans metode kaldes gematria og forklares således i WIKIPEDIA (Oversat fra engelsk): "Gematria er praksis med at tildele en numerisk værdi til et navn, ord eller en sætning i henhold til et alfanumerisk chiffer. Et enkelt ord kan give flere værdier afhængigt af det anvendte chiffer. Hebraiske alfanumeriske cifre blev sandsynligvis brugt i bibelsk tid og blev senere adopteret af andre kulturer." Metoden indebærer sproglig religiøs geometri, som jeg aldrig har oplevet før. Forfatteren er vedholdende, konsekvent og utvivlsomt uhyre intelligent.

Det er ikke et værk for folk, der gerne vil bevare deres barnetro, men de vil sikkert også hurtigt give op – ligesom de fleste, der får fingre i bogen, formodentlig vil – i hvert fald ikke nærlæse den. Det er imponerende, men i længden trættende.

At kristendommen er et konglomerat af mange forskellige religioner, er velkendt for forskere, og LINDTNER har sikkert ret i mange af sine iagttagelser, men jeg tror, han overdriver sin argumentation, konkluderer nok FOR bevidst om, hvad hans hensigt er. Den kontroversielle forsker har jo taget fejl før, da han var holocaust-benægter – og dertil antisemit, arbejdede ideologisk sammen med POVL H. RIIS-KNUDSEN, der var leder af den nyere danske nazistbevægelse og som har skrevet hans nekrolog her i bogen.

Nu skal uenighed på nogle punkter ikke stille sig i vejen for, at man kan anerkende en dygtig forskning på andre områder. I forvejen er der ikke de store forskelle på de værdier, man kan uddrage af kristendommen og buddhismen. Andre, bl.a. forskeren BENT JENSEN, har tidligere argumenteret for at MUHAMMED ikke har eksisteret. At de på godt og ondt mest indflydelsesrige personer i verdenshistorien ikke har levet – DET tror jeg ikke på.

Man kan kun blive forvirret på et højere plan ved at stifte bekendtskab med denne bog, der med garanti ikke bliver nogen bestseller.

Hemmeligheden om Kristus kan erhverves her: Rostras Forlag.

[15-01-2022] Bogudgivelse: "Hemmeligheden om Kristus" af dr. phil. Christian Lindtner er udkommet

Bogen udkom d. 1. december sidste år på Rostras Forlag. Bogen kan købes i diverse boghandler: www.gucca.dk, www.saxo.com, <https://mizzcool.dk> m.fl.

Læs anmeldelse af bogen af Bitten-Kirsti Nielsen her.

[14-01-2022] Aggersborg Tantram

Dr. Christian Lindtner's article - Aggersborg Tantram - together with an obituary by Radha Raghunathan has been published in "The Adyar Library Bulletin" vol. 85, 2021.

Obituary by Radha Raghunathan:

DR CHRISTIAN LINDTNER (14.06.1949-04.11.2020)

Here was a Danish scholar who firmly believed that Christianity had its roots in Buddhism. His writings seen in his website <https://www.jesusisbuddha.com>, testify to his belief.

He re-affirms this view in his article 'Aggersborg Tantram' in this volume. But it was not until 1998 that he presented this thesis of his.

— Dr Christian Lindtner's son, Niels Jørgen Lindtner, a scholar himself like father, writes to the undersigned: "I am working on having my father's book 'Hemmeligheten om Kristus'/'Geheimnisse um Jesus Christus' published here in Denmark. (So far it has only been published in Germany and Sweden) and it is due to be released this fall. In his foreword he writes, that the first time he ever presented his thesis, that Christianity is really a branch of Buddhism, was in 1998 at the festivities at Buddha mahotsava in Sarnath, India. Furthermore he writes that his speech at this event was printed in India with the title: 'Buddhism in Relation to Science and World Religions....'"

A written interview by Niels Lindtner with Michael Lockwood, the author of Buddhism's Relation to Christianity, The unknown Buddha of Christianity and Mythicism also says:

"In November 1998, in Sarnath, India, [Chr. Lindtner] gave his introductory address to an international assembly, claiming that the four canonical New Testament gospels are copies of Buddhist gospels."

Dr Christian Lindtner earned a M.A in Indian philology (1979) after studying classical and oriental languages, religion and philosophy at the University of Copenhagen, and Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies (1982). He had travelled to several countries like Sweden, Germany, USA and India in the course of his studies and academic and professional pursuits. He had held teaching and research positions in subjects allied to Asian Languages and Literature, Buddhist and Religious Studies, Sanskrit and Pāli in the Universities of Lund, Copenhagen, Washington, and Virginia.

This prolific writer in Danish and English has edited several publications and been on the Editorial Board of prestigious research publication institutions, including the Adyar Library and Research Centre (ALRC). It was our privilege this eminent scholar of global repute was a member in our Editorial Board for many years and a regular contributor of

articles and Text and Studies to Brahmaavidya: The Adyar Library Bulletin for nearly two decades. His passing away at the age of 71 is indeed a loss to ALRC and the academic world.

RADHA RAGHUNATHAN

Aggersborg Tantram by dr. Christian Lindtner:

[15-11-2021] 'Hemmeligheden om Kristus' udkommer på dansk 1. december d.å.

Pga. en forsinkelse udkom "Hemmeligheden om Kristus" ikke i oktober måned. Til gengæld kommer den i boghandlen d. 1 december. Bestil bogen hos forlaget.

Fra bogens bagside:

Denne bog er en bombe under den vestlige verdens selvforståelse! En bombe under bøgernes bog: Biblen.

Den nyligt afdøde danske indolog og internationalt anerkendte buddhismeforsker dr. phil. Christian Lindtner (1949-2020) viser i denne bog, at kristendommen i det store og hele er en efterligning af Mahâyâna-buddhismen.

Denne erkendelse blev først muliggjort i 1977, da nyopdagede sanskrittekster, herunder Samghabhedavastu, i trykt form blev vidt og bredt tilgængelige. Den vigtigste kilde til de kristne evangelier er den berømte Lotûssutra – Mahâyâna-buddhismens hovedværk og en enestående eventyrfortælling i sig selv. Den store helt hedder her Tathâgata, som er et blandt flere navne på Buddha. Han dør ikke, han er i al evighed, men ingen kender ham, som han virkelig er.

Forfatteren demonstrerer, hvordan Jesus slet og ret er Tathâgatas, men bevidst forklædt og tilsløret som jødernes konge og lovgiver. Han ofrer sit liv og sjæl – helt ligesom andre Tathâgataer – for at andre kan blive frelst. At han blev født, døbt, prædikede, helbredte syge osv. er alt sammen kun opspind – en urgammel litterær fiktionsgenre.

Følgeslutningen er ikke til at komme udenom: Det Nye Testaments evangelier lader ingen plads til en forestilling om en historisk Jesus. Dette gælder også for næsten alle andre personer og lokaliteter i Det Nye Testamente. Der er tale om fiktion på fiktion. Forfatteren Christian Lindtner (1949-2020) blev i 1982 dr.phil. på en afhandling om den indiske filosof Nâgârjuna, der anvendes som lærebog på mange universiteter over hele verden. Han har udgivet bøger på dansk om buddhismen, der benyttes i de danske gymnasier.

Han præsenterede første gang sin teori om, at kristendommen er skjult Mahâyâna-buddhisme på en festival i Sarnath i Indien i 1998. Udover at skrive bøger

var forfatteren også en flittig læserbrevsskribent. Bogen indeholder et appendiks indeholdende alle forfatterens artikler fra diverse danske dagblade vedrørende kristendommen og den danske folkekirke.

Endvidere drev forfatteren også hjemmesiden: www.jesusisbuddha.com

Christian Lindtner har publiceret og fremlagt nogle skelsættende og originale ideer om buddhismen og dens forhold til andre religioner.

- K. Kunjunni Raja, professor emeritus i sanskrit, æresdoktor mm.

Lindtner lærer os at se verden med nye øjne.

- K. Mylius, professor, dr. dr.

[21-06-2021] 'Hemmeligheden om Kristus' udkommer på dansk til oktober d.å.

Min fars bog, Hemmeligheden om Kristus, udkommer på dansk på Rostras Forlag til oktober d.å. Bogen udkom først på svensk i 2003 og siden i 2005 på tysk.

Man kan læse om bogen her og her.

Er man interesseret i at forhåndsbestille et eksemplar er man velkommen til at skrive til: njlindtner@hotmail.com

- Niels Jørgen Lindtner

[22-02-2021] Christian Lindtner (1949-2020) In Memoriam

Her følger tre skrifter som er blevet forfattet til min nyligt afdøde faders minde. Det er en rar tanke, at min far har betydet noget for andre mennesker, i en sådan grad, at man har taget sig tid til at forfatte et skrift til hans mindes ihukommelse.

Niels Jørgen Lindtner, njlindtner@hotmail.com

In memoriam * Dr.phil. Christian Lindtner * 1949-2020

Christian Lindtner blev født ind i en god og klassisk dannet familie, og han kunne med sin enestående begavelse været blevet hvad som helst. Hans hu stod imidlertid til de klassiske studier, og han studerede først med henblik på en embedseksamen i klassisk filologi, men da han fandt det for let, studerede han videre, idet han kastede sig over de

klassiske indiske sprog sanskrit og påli og studiet af de indiske religioner, herunder buddhismen. Denne var tidligere udbredt over det meste af Asien, og de skrifter, der var forsvundne i Indien, findes ofte i oversættelser i andre lande som f.eks. Tibet og Kina. Christian Lindtner forsynede sig følgelig med de fornødne sprogkundskaber og gik derefter på jagt efter skrifter til sin disputats i hele Sydøstasien.

Hans akademiske karriere førte ham bl.a. til University of Washington i Seattle og til en stilling ved Københavns universitet. De klassiske studier var imidlertid allerede dengang truede, og efterhånden forsvandt indologien helt fra universitetet. Lindtner var heller ikke nogen ydmyg lakaj for de herskende kræfter, og han kom til sidst på kant med rektor Nathan – som han konsekvent i skrivelser åbenlyst betegnede som rector marxismus Satan. Det måtte naturligvis ende galt, men Christian Lindtner var ikke økonomisk afhængig af en stilling på universitetet, så da han fik en fyreseddel, trak han sig tilbage til at være, hvad man på tysk kalder Privatgelehrter, og som sådan publicerede han en uendelig række videnskabelige artikler og bøger, ligesom han deltog i videnskabelige konferencer og optrådte som foredragsholder og gæstelærer i hele den civiliserede verden. Han betegnes i dag internationalt som en af verdens mest betydende eksperter i buddhisme.

Christian Lindtner var en af dette lands kyndigste religionsforskere – men i sit fædreland var han en af de mindst agtede, idet han ikke kunne købes, hverken med penge eller virak. Han ledtes i sit arbejde utrætteligt af sin konstante søgen efter den ultimative sandhed, ligegyldig hvor denne søgning måtte føre ham hen. Havde han en tese, undersøgte han den, og viste det sig, at den ikke var holdbar, klæbede han ikke til den og brugte ikke sin tid på at forsvare det, som ikke kunne forsvares. Dette var ganske tydeligt, da Christian Lindtner kastede sig over holocaustrevisionismen, provokeret af den megen dårlige litteratur, der findes om dette emne. Han deltog således i den berygtede konference i Teheran, hvor han fik til opgave at undersøge denne sag til bunds. Det gjorde han. Han kom ikke blot frem til, at de revisionistiske historikere snød med kilderne, men fandt også, at der jo foreligger et stort materiale af tyske kilder, som er uimodsigeligt. Dette blev imidlertid fuldstændig ignoreret af revisionisterne – men heller ikke i stor udstrækning benyttet af populærvidenskabens hollywoodprægede fremstillinger, der ofte bygger på mere end tvivlsomme "vidneudsagn". Christian Lindtner fulgte derfor sin samvittighed og sit videnskabelige instinkt, og med sit sædvanlige vid, som måske nok ikke var for enhver, hudflettede han revisionismens store navne og blev en af fædrene til den revisionistiske bevægelses faktiske død.

Mange tog ham hans studier af holocaust ilde op, men de beviste jo imidlertid blot hans retsindighed og hans videnskabelighed i en verden, der generelt sætter tro over viden. Hans desværre sidste store projekt blev en grundig undersøgelse af kristendommens kilder. Som en af de meget få her i landet beherskede han ikke blot latin og græsk til perfektion, men også buddhismens sprog sanskrit og påli (foruden tibetansk og kinesisk). På denne baggrund kunne han afsløre, at Det Nye Testaments evangelier i hovedsagen blot er en kopi af ældre indiske skrifter – helt ned i den mindste sproglige detalje. Dette førte ham på kollisionskurs med landets præsteskab og ikke mindst med biskopperne. Han betragtede kirkens fløjlsnæver som en bande halvstuderende røvere og forkælede nassere, der blot klæber til deres fede embeder og nægter at undersøge

det, de hver søndag står og prædiker om. Et særligt mål for hans angreb var de teologiske uddannelser, hvor man blot hygger sig med sine rigelige midler i stedet for at lære sig sanskrit og undersøge kristendommens virkelige oprindelse. Som en teolog sagde til ham under en konference: "Jeg vil ikke lære sanskrit", idet han stampede i gulvet som et lille barn. Teologernes holdning er: "Dette vil vi ikke vide!" Christian Lindtners konklusion var, at både den danske folkekirke og den katolske kirke i dag først og fremmest er indbringende forretninger – og et skalkeskjul for kommunistisk undergravelse.

Christian Lindtners sidste publikation blev hans efterskrift til Geoff Roberts netop udkomne bog Jesus har aldrig levet, Indblik 2020. Den skulle have været præsenteret ved en sammenkomst på Christiansborg den 8. november. Bogen vil senere blive anmeldt her på bloggen.

Christian Lindtner var derudover en god national dansker, der kæmpede for at bevare det Danmark, vi begge er vokset op i, og den kultur og de mennesker, der har skabt det. Dette bragte ham ofte på kollisionskurs med den jødiske elite, men Christian Lindtner var meget langt fra at være vulgær antisemit. Som videnskabsmand iagttog han sin omverden og drog sine sagligt velfunderede konklusioner.

Han kunne på mange felter indtage en ironisk distance til sin omverden, men når han så sine kerneværdier truet, kastede han sig med fuld kraft ind i kampen. Christian Lindtner satte den danske sprogforsker Rasmus Rask meget højt. Rask var Lindtners forgænger inden for studiet af de indiske sprog, og Christian gjorde Rasmus Rasks gravskrift til motto for sit eget liv: "Sit fædreland skylder man alt, hvad man kan udrette!"

Men frem for alt var Christian Lindtner et ædelt, anstændigt, nobelt og særdeles dannet menneske, hvem svig, løgn, bedrag og nid lå uendelig fjernt. Dette er i dag desværre et sjældent karaktertræk. I min sidste udveksling af e-mails med Christian, hvor vi netop diskuterede den akademiske verdens råddenskab, skriver han den 27. oktober: "Jeg bliver snart revolutionær!". Jeg svarede ham: "Men har du noget reb og en høtyv, så lad os gå i gang Jeg er med!" Christian svarede: "Fint, derfor må vi passe godt på vores helbred!! Det er for meget!". Dagen efter blev han indlagt på Rigshospitalet, og en uge senere var han død. Det er ikke til at fatte!

Et uendeligt reservoir af viden er dermed pludselig gået tabt – viden, som i dag meget, meget få mennesker besidder. Store planer er blevet til intet. Vi, hans venner, føler tomheden og savnet af de inspirerende og underholdende diskussioner, hvor vi i timevis kunne undersøge og vende og dreje denne verdens største emner, så vi glemte tid og sted, og hverken fik vådt eller tørt. Det havde vi ikke tid til. Der var vigtigere ting på programmet. Vi vil savne hans bidende ironi og sviende humor. Vore tanker går naturligvis også til hans familie, hvis tab er endnu større. Vor sidste sammenkomst blev optaget og kan høres på Radio Lindtner.

Vi har nu en forpligtelse til med de beskedne midler, vi besidder, at forsøge at videreføre noget af hans arbejde og virkeliggøre nogle af hans visioner.

Æret være Christian Lindtners minde!

Povl H. Riis-Knudsen

Dette mindeskrift af Povl H. Riis-Knudsen blev først bragt på hjemmesiden:
www.danmarksfrihedsraad.com

NYHEDER: Christian Lindtner gik desværre borte tidligere på ugen kort efter en operation i hjertet. Det er ikke bare et enormt tab for hans venner og familie, men for hele kampen for den hvide races overlevelse og i jagten på sandheden.

Jeg havde desværre kun fornøjelsen at tale med Christian Lindtner i omkring tre timer under optagelsen af Opråb #12, men på den tid blev det klart for mig, at han var en utroligt begavet, imødekommende mand, og et helt igennem godt menneske.

Christians al for tidlige død har ikke kun sat sine spor blandt nationalister her i Danmark, men i hele Norden. Dagen efter jeg havde hørt den tragiske nyhed fra en kammerat her i Danmark, begyndte nordmænd og svenskere også at fortælle mig tabet – et lille indblik i, hvor indflydelsesrig og værdsat en person han var. En kommentar fra en norsk kammerat beskrev tabet utroligt godt "mennesker som ham kan ikke erstattes".

Christian kæmpede ihærdigt for at gøre verden til et bedre sted, heriblandt hans forsøg på at stoppe universiteternes fald i kvalitet og latterliggørelse, kernefamiliens opløsning, masseindvandringen og kulturen, arkitekturen, og kunstens totale forfald. Et godt eksempel på de retmæssige høje forventninger han havde til universiteterne og hans retfærdige vrede over, at de ikke kan leve op til hans forventninger, var hans beskrivelse af "en historisk velkomst", som han sendte til mig over mail: "En komiker, en rektor, en teologistuderende og fire kaglene hængt foran talerstolen, hvor Madvig og andre ordentlige mennesker engang stod". Dertil tilføjede han: "Det ER FOR MEGET!... Jeg erfarer netop, at nu, hvor alle de gamle filologier er udryddet, tager man fat på de sidste rester af græsk, dernæst latin. Så har proletariats diktatur omsider sejret. 130 teologer gnider sig i hænderne. De får lov til at overtage græsk og latin og fortsætte med deres løgne".

Dette gør sig særligt klart, når man ser hele Christians lange og imponerende karriere – for en gennemgang, der er skrevet af Povl H. Riis-Knudsen, opfordres læseren til at læse med her.

Heri beskriver Povl H. Riis-Knudsen Christian Lindtner blandt andet således: "Han kunne på mange felter indtage en ironisk distance til sin omverden, men når han så sine

kerneverdier truet, kastede han sig med fuld kraft ind i kampen". Christian Lindtner gjorde Rasmus Rasks gravskrift til sit motto for sit eget liv: "Sit fædreland skylder man alt, hvad man kan udrette!" – Og det må man sige, at han gjorde!

Christian Lindtner er desværre ikke blandt os længere, men hans arbejde og hans kamp for en bedre verden stopper ikke med ham. Vi har en pligt overfor Christian Lindtner og tusinder af andre store mænd og kvinder til at forsætte arbejdet for en bedre fremtid!

Æret være Christian Lindtners minde!

Dette mindeskrift af Asbjørn Nielsen blev først bragt på hjemmesiden: www.nordfront.dk

"Dr. Christian Lindtner lämnar oss med en sanningssökares eko"

Dr. Christian Lindtner var en sanningssökande forskare som präglades av en öppensinnad ödmjukhet och inte ryggade tillbaka heller för kontroversiella ämnen. Hans bortgång är ett oerhört tråkigt besked, främst för hans närmaste, men också för samhället, som han hade mer att bidra till. Det skriver Nya Dagbladets Per Nordin.

Jag hade inte haft kontakt med Dr. Christian Lindtner sedan någon gång under hösten, och det tog viss tid innan jag fick det mycket tråkiga beskedet att han hade avlidit av sjukdom den 4 november.

Christian Lindtner var professor emeritus och doktor i religionsvetenskap vid Köpenhamns universitet.

Dr. Lindtner var en sanningssökande person som inte drog sig inför att studera och exponera känsliga och politiskt inkorrekta ämnen även om det betydde att han själv utsattes för mycket hård kritik från personer som ännu följer det konventionella systemtänkandet. Han har bland annat forskat och skrivit ett flertal böcker om buddhismens influenser på kristendomen, exempelvis boken "Hemligheten om Kristus: Nya testamentet är Buddhas testamente", som finns översatt till svenska.

Därtill lät han sig inte hejdas för att ta tag i sådana mycket kontroversiella ämnen, som exempelvis judiska maktstrukturer och rasrealism. På Nya Dagbladet skrev han så sent som i augusti debattartikeln "Jämlikhetshysterin upphäver inte människornas fundamentala olikheter".

Dr. Lindtner var också en sann patriot för Danmarks och Nordens folk, och arbetade ihärdigt för dess frihet.

År 2011 var Dr. Lindtner med och anordnade och deltog på konferensen "Revolt against Civilization", där bland annat Professor Kevin MacDonald, Dr. Tom Sunic, Professor emerit. Helmuth Nyborg, Dr. David Duke, Dr. Alexander Jakob och advokaten Knud Eriksen deltog.

Som sanningssökande forskare var han inte den som envist stod fast vid en viss bestämd tes om nya bevis framkom som övertygande honom om motsatsen. Ett exempel på denna typ av öppensinnad ödmjukhet fick bland annat Dr. Lindtner att ändra uppfattning angående förintelsen, där han tidigare varit anhängare av så kallad "förintelserevisionism" (som anslår att inget organiserat folkmord av judar genomfördes under andra världskriget). Med sina fortsatta granskningar av ämnesområdet kom han sedermera att ifrågasätta och revidera sina egna tidigare slutsatser.

Nämnas kan att Lindtner inte är ensam om att ha ändrat sin uppfattning av frågan. Andra framstående personligheter har också kommit att revidera sina slutsatser, exempelvis Mark Weber, David Irving, David Cole och Eric Hunt. Dr. Lindtner höll dock likt Weber samtidigt stadigt fast vid sin kritik mot judisk makt-rörelsen, vilken han öppet kritiserade. Detta framkommer bland annat av hans utförliga artikel om Frankfurtskolan. För ingen av dessa hållningar vann han några personliga fördelar, utan lät alltid tvärtom sin övertygelse om vad som faktiskt var sant leda honom framåt.

Povl H. Riis-Knudsen har skrivit till Dr. Lindtners minne här, där man kan läsa mer om honom.

Det är ett oerhört tråkigt besked, främst för hans närmast anhöriga och vänner, men också för samhället, som han hade mer att bidra till. Jag hade exempelvis sett framemot fler artiklar, intervjuer med mera på Nya Dagbladet.

Vi har förlorat en god, hederlig och modig man, och mina tankar går till hans familj.

Vila i frid Christian.

Per Nordin

Dette mindeskrift af Per Nordin blev først bragt på hjemmesiden: www.nyadagbladet.se

Søllerød kirkegård

[09-02-2021] A short written interview with author of Buddhism's Relation to Christianity, Mythicism and the Unknown Buddha of Christianity prof. Michael Lockwood.

A warm thank you to prof. Michael Lockwood for taking the time to answering a few

questions on his views and studies into the field of comparative religion and for permitting me to share it with my father's circle of readers here on www.jesusisbuddha.com
Niels Jørgen Lindtner

When did you first come across the work of my father, Dr. Christian Lindtner?

In June 1998, I retired from teaching philosophy in South India, at Madras Christian College, a college affiliated with the University of Madras. Later in this same year, in November 1998, in Sarnath, India, your father gave his introductory address to an international assembly, claiming that the four canonical New Testament gospels are copies of Buddhist gospels. At that time, I knew nothing about your father or his ideas, but for several years earlier I had independently come to the general idea that Christianity was a Western branch of Buddhism. No marshaling of facts or publication.

So, soon after settling into retirement, I first came to read about your father's ideas, and I then took up the task of vigorously researching the issues ever since.

How come you found your way into this field of comparative religion? What is your background?

I was born in British India, in 1933, to liberal, Yankee, Congregational, educational missionaries working at The American College, in the southern city of Madurai, where my father was teaching mathematics. My three brothers and I had a happy life growing up in India.

After graduating from high school in India, I earned degrees from Oberlin College, B.A. (English), Boston University, M.A. (philosophy), and Madras University, Ph.D. (philosophy).

My doctoral dissertation on Charles S. Peirce's critique of Descartes' epistemology was published by Blackie & Sons (Bombay 1981), with a new title: Peirce's Pragmatism: An Introduction to His Philosophy. Other published books:

In comparative religion: Buddhism's Relation to Christianity (Madras 2010); Mythicism (Madras 2013); and The Unknown Buddha of Christianity (Tambaram 2019).

In Indology: (as editor and contributor) Indological Essays: Commemorative Volume II for Gift Siromoney (Tambaram 1992); as author, Mâmallapuram: A Guide to the Monuments (Madras 1993); Pallava Art (Madras 2005); Metatheater and Sanskrit Drama (Madras 2005); Basic Tamil Verb Tables (Madras 2007).

I taught philosophy for thirty-two years (1966-1998), in South India at Madras Christian

College, Tambaram, affiliated with the University of Madras.

Are you convinced that the evangelists – whoever they were – used Buddhist material when composing the New Testament? If yes, to what extent?

According to my paradigm, the evangelists – all four of them writing in the 2nd century CE – were most likely Indian Buddhist monks whose recent forebears had been members of the Therapeutæ monastics who lived just outside the city of Alexandria, above the shores of Lake Mareotis, but had been disbanded, around 70 CE, by the Roman army. These Therapeutæ, back in the mid-3rd century BCE had become the very first ever semii-converts to Judaism (the so-called “God-fearers”). Over the centuries the ratio of Indian members to Westerners became lower and lower, but the four evangelist had a better grasp of Pāli/Sanskrit languages than Greek! – and were therefore most likely ethnic Indians.

So, to answer your question decisively: Yes, they were Buddhists, using Buddhist ideas in Jewish “clothing”!

If we maintain the syncretic viewpoint of Christianity for a moment and if we were to describe it as a cake – say, how much Buddhism, Judaism, Hellenistic mystery cults (and other things as well?) respectively, in percentages, is in there, in your opinion?

You will never get a true answer that way. It’s more like a cult taking over people from other persuasions: 80% of the brain Buddhist!

Is there a “best proof”, in your opinion, of Buddhist material in the Gospels?

It’s hard to bring proofs to bear on minds hypnotized by familiar beliefs.

Many authors (such as John Michell for example) will make the argument that there is gematria going on in the Gospels. Do you share this viewpoint?

Gematria is definitely there in the Greek. Your father has shown that. But when I wrote to him not long before his passing, asking him to provide equivalent numbers for the Pāli or Sanskrit languages, he never did get around to answering me. Do you know what he might have answered?

At least one author, my father Dr. Christian Lindtner, went further and explored the possibility that gematria was also going on in the Buddhist sutras. What did you think of this?

See my answer above!

Is Jesus Buddha, would you say, as the name of my father's website suggest?

Absolutely! The Buddha is the euhemeristic source of the developed historical-fiction of the New Testament. But your father believed that the Buddha was purely fiction, too! Where I would guess that the Buddha was in some sense historical, while admitting that

very much of the stoires about him are pure fiction!

If Christianity is indeed based on a syncretic literary text rather than an historical account one might speculate the basis of other religions as well. Do you have any view about the historicity of Islam for example? Not to mention Buddhism itself?

Islam has been much influenced by Judaism, less by Christianity (which, of course is really crypto-Buddhism), and only in Sufism, by Buddhism. But I have not made a study of Islam.

If Christianity is really based on a syncretic text, and not a historical one, what consequences, if generally accepted, will that have?

Huge! If common folks could realize the interrelation of all religions – how each has developed out of others, most of the violence in the world would be avoided.

You open one of your books - I forget which one - with quoting an Indian(?) saying; that it is dangerous to look into the nature of Godmen and Rishis (I forget the right words).... has your own experience proven that saying true?

Your father, sadly, was treated very badly by academics when he was active early in his professional life. I, on the other hand, published in this radical field only in 2010, 12 years into retirement – where I live the life of an academic hermit in a small port city (population only 7,000+) in the state of Maine.

That quote you refer to is in the Preface of Buddhism's Relation to Christianity (2010), my first book on the subject.

[25-12-2020] Niels Jørgen Lindtner in conversation with Naser Khader.

In connection with the publication of the book *Jesus har aldrig levet* I was at Christianborg Palace in Copenhagen to discuss its contents with member of Danish parliament Naser Khader. The conversation - with English subtitles - can be watched below.

[22-11-2020] Bogen "Jesus har aldrig levet" er udkommet.

For præcist en måned siden, torsdag d. 22 oktober, udkom undertegnede's oversættelse af englænderen Geoff Roberts bog *Jesus 888* på forlaget EgoLibris med den danske titel *Jesus har aldrig levet*. Bogen er forsynet med et forord af cand. mag. i tysk og

religionsvidenskab Johan Chr. Nord og et efterskrift af min nyligt afdøde fader dr. phil. Christian Lindtner. Bogen kan erhverves her.

Niels Jørgen Lindtner, 22-11-2020.

[08-11-2020] No more updates by dr. Christian Lindtner (1949-2020).
1949-2020

On the 4th of November my father, Christian Lindtner, died following a heart surgery.

I, his youngest son, will continue his work and keep this webpage running and continue to bring news whenever there is some to bring.

Niels Jørgen Lindtner, 8th of November, 2020.

njlindtner@hotmail.com

En nekrolog findes her. Og her.

[29-08-2020] Kan man finde en ærlig biskop?

Nedenstående læserbrev af dr. phil. Chr. Lindtner blev bragt i dag i Frederiksberg Amts Avis lørdag d. 29. august, 2020.

[27-08-2020] Valget og evangeliernes rette forkyndelse

Nedenstående forkortede debatindlæg af dr. phil. Chr. Lindtner blev bragt i Det Grønne Område mandag d. 25 august, 2020. Det fulde indlæg kan læses her.

[21-08-2020] UNSER MITTELEUROPA: Dr. Christian Lindtner: Über christliche und buddhistische Evangelien

<https://unser-mitteleuropa.com/dr-christian-lindtner-ueber-christliche-und-buddhistische-evangelien/>

[15-08-2020] Kommende dansk bogudgivelse: Jesus har aldrig levet.

En dansk oversættelse af englænderen Geoff Roberts Jesus 888 udkommer den 22. oktober dette år på forlaget EgoLibris. På dansk har bogen fået navnet: Jesus har aldrig levet. Bogen kan allerede nu forudbestilles på diverse internetboghandler - for eksempel her. Bogen præsenteres som følger af forlaget:

I Jesus har aldrig levet mødes troen og videnskaben i et elegant slag, hvor de myter, kristendommen er bygget på, gennemhulles.

I en kontroversiel analyse af den tidlige kristendoms historie afsløres information, der for langt størstedelen er helt ukendt for offentligheden, og som giver en fuldstændig ny og for mange rystende vinkel på den bibelhistorie, de fleste af os kender – videnskabeligt dokumenteret og baseret på historiske fakta.

Til fans af religiøse historier og læsere, der nød afsløringen af længe skjulte gåder i Da Vinci mysteriet.

Geoff Roberts blev født i Liverpool i 1948 og var igennem hele sit liv interesseret i religion og de mennesker, der praktiserede den. Da han blev diagnosticeret med prostatakræft, begyndte han at forske i den tidlige kristendom og de gnostiske evangelier – et emne, som han i lang tid havde interesseret sig for – og resultatet blev Jesus har aldrig levet. Geoff Roberts døde af sin sygdom i 2012.

[08-06-2020] Ny revideret udgave af D.M. Murdocks "The Christ Conspiracy" med efterskrift af dr. phil. Chr. Lindtner om de buddhistiske kilder til den kristne dåb og nadver. Kan købes på amazon.

[08-06-2020] Hvad er det, Gud vil have?

Nedenstående læserbrev af dr. phil. Christian Lindtner blev bragt i Frederiksborg Amts Avis mandag d. 25 maj, 2020.

[25-02-2020] En sød og kærlig frelsermand

Nedenstående læserbrev af dr. phil. Christian Lindtner blev bragt i Frederiksborg Amts Avis mandag d. 24 februar, 2020.

Se også diverse andre læserbreve af Christian Lindtner bragt i Frederiksborg Amts Avis:

Langfredags mørke og andre eventyr

Kirkeministerens største problembarn

I en teologisk trængselstid

[01-02-2020] A new book that prof. Heike Omerzu does not want to read by prof. Michael Lockwood now available: The Unknown Buddha of Christianity.

When offered to be presented with the Buddhist sources of the New Testament back in 2015, prior to a conference in Roskilde, Denmark, about Q, Prof. Heike Omerzu responded, that an identification of Q was not an issue she, and the other organizers of the conference, liked to address; Q is, of course, an hypothetical text, speculated to have been a text that the canonical evangelists found inspiration in, but hitherto, not identified. Rather than identifying Q, Heike stressed, that she, and the other organizers of the conference, were interested in the process of identifying Q and what this process of identifying Q would mean for interpreting the Gospels. Here are Heike's own words in an email to some of the participants:

"... the issue we would like to address is not an "identification" of Q but to question what is at stake in the quest for sources and which difference this makes for gospel interpretation."

- prof. Heike Omerzu, 21. maj, 2015.

Alas, the source of the New Testament, that Heike Omerzu does not want to read is now available in Prof. Michael Lockwood's new book: *The Unknown Buddha of Christianity*. Twelve new contributions on Buddhist sources of the New Testament. Sanskrit and Pāli sources of the Greek text. Without Sanskrit and Pāli the Greek New Testament remains a great mystery - but also, most importantly, a perennial source of income for phony New Testament scholars.

When Prof. Mogens Müller retired from Copenhagen University, his post was taken over by Heike, who had, in Roskilde done her best to prevent Lindtner from presenting the original Buddhist sources of the New Testament, i.e. Q. The Roskilde papers are now available in print: *Gospel Interpretation and the Q-Hypothesis*. It was edited by Mogens "Menschensohn" Müller & ever-obsequious Heike Omerzu. As a work of fiction it is fine, as a work of scholarship it is trash.

None of the participants in Roskilde in May 2015 protested, when Mogens and Heike attempted to prevent Lindtner from presenting Q. Hence one may conclude that the most prominent New Testament scholars are mainly interested in Q as a great source of personal income. To admit a Buddhist Q would be suicidal. There were no protests from the Rector of the University of Copenhagen. All Danish students of theology are now aware how risky it is for their CV to say: But Q is Buddhist! Download Prof. Lockwood's new book for free at:

https://www.academia.edu/41551932/THE_UNKNOWN_BUDDHA_OF_CHRISTIANITY

[06-01-2020] Protest er en borgerpligt

Nedenstående debatindlæg af Chr. Lindtner blev bragt i Frederiksborg Amts Avis, d. 6 januar, 2020.

I Roskilde Domkirke ligger vore gamle konger og dronninger på rad i deres sarkofager, og de venter. Hvad de hedengangne troskyldigt venter på er opfyldelsen af de håb og de løfter, de har modtaget af deres biskopper om de dødes opstandelse - »med hud og hår«, ifølge en dansk biskop og kgl. konfessionarius. For dannede romere og grækere var troen på de dødes fysiske opstandelse fornuftigvis et udslag af kristent vanvid. Men selv om troen stred mod al fornuft, så øjnede skruppelløse biskopper en vældig fidus i at ophøje og markedsføre overtroen, som var det Guds ord. Dogmet fandt plads side om side med andre absurditeter i den trosbekendelse, der stadig lyder i kirkerne. Hvor sandt, at verden ville bedrages. Ikke mindst den lutherske.

De seneste års forskning i kristendommens buddhistiske rødder har kastet helt nyt lys over baggrunden for troen på de dødes opstandelse. Der er tale om en satire eller spøg. Buddhistmunke elsker at fortælle opbyggelige eventyr. Særlig kendt er en fabel om buddhister, der - som Niels Klim - tager på besøg under jorden for senere at dukke op derfra igen. De besøger helvede, og folk dernede har det ikke spor rart, men de lever, de er ikke døde. På sanskrit hedder de NaRaKaS. Buddhistmunke elsker ordspil,

og det er da nærliggende at oversætte NaRaKaS med det græske NeKRoS, der imidlertid betyder død!

Sådan forvandles de levende under jorden til døde, der kommer op på jorden. Bag det ubegribelige kristne dogme om legemlig opstandelse fra graven ligger altså det velkendte buddhistiske eventyr om folk, der besøger deres ulykkelige venner under jorden for at trøste dem, og som slet ikke har været døde. Når straffen er afsonet, kommer de op igen - som Jesus. Døde har synderne aldrig været. Det uspiselige åndelige måltid, der serveres i trosbekendelsen, er altså resterne af velkendte buddhistiske eventyr. Man kan være sikker i sin sag, for flere andre ting, der siges i bekendelsen, og sakramenter som dåb og nadver, kan også spores ord for ord tilbage til buddhistiske kilder.

Biskopperne har indbudt os alle til en åben debat om gudstjeneste, dåb og nadver, og medgiver, at der knytter sig mange uløste gåder til gudstjenestens sakramenter. Man skal dog ikke være som de troskyldige i sarkofagerne, for vor tids gejstlige er ikke forvandlet til fromme lam. Spørger man, om de tror på Niels Klims rejse under jorden eller om, at Jesus virkelig sidder oppe på en sky, så får man intet svar. I april mødes alle biskopperne på Fyn for at snakke om nogle af disse ting. På det offentliges regning, naturligvis, som altid. Kongerne og dronningerne i Roskilde Domkirke er lovligt afskåret fra at møde op og stille snydekåberne til regnskab. Jeg anser protest for en borgerpligt. Eller bør folkekirken stadig være en helle for hyklere og et refugium for øjenskalke?

Protest er en borgerpligt.pdf

[05-10-2019] I en teologisk trængselstid

Af dr. phil. Christian Lindtner. Bragt i Frederiksborg Amts Avis d. 05-10-2019.

Selvom en naturlig følelse af lede og afmagt ikke tilskynder, er det ønskeligt, at samvittighedsfulde medborgere holder et vågent øje med de nye og gamle kneb og koglerier, der præger de teologiske broderskaber i kirke og på universiteter - så meget desto mere som skiftende kirkeministre med embedsmænd ikke er den alvorlige samfundsopgave voksen.

Professionelle teologer og folkekirkepræster har netop afholdt en universitetskonference om "håb - i en trængselstid". Som altid afholdes udgifterne af det offentlige, det gælder også et par pjattede pjecer om dåb og nadver udsendt tidligere på året. De kan vist stadig rekvireres vederlagsfrit på et lokalt kirkekontor. Som altid er det deltagerne, der selv bedømmer sig selv og egne meritter - med selvros først til skyerne og så helt op til stakkels vorherre i himlen. Han må have det hårdt, når danske teologer konfererer om ham!

Den dybeste grund til at en uvildig iagttager med føje kan tale om en teologisk trængselstid blev naturligvis ikke berørt, hverken på denne eller andre lignende konferencer.

Her i landet findes mere end to tusinde teologer, og deres eksistens står og falder med eksistensen af en vis jøde kaldet Jesus Kristus, der skulle være søn af gud og en gold mor, og tilmed en gevaldig mirakelmager.

Efter min erfaring, er der efterhånden ingen dansk universitetsteolog, der tør sværge på, at en sådan gudesøn og menneskefrelser overhovedet har eksisteret. Er han som et

eventyrland, der slet ikke findes på kortet?

Alt tyder på, at Jesus fra Nazaret - en magisk by, der slet ikke fandtes på datidens kort - blot er et produkt af ukendte digteres fantasi.

Hvis det blev klart for en bredere offentlighed, hvilket kæmpemæssigt teologisk bedrag, der her er tale om, ville det blive en ægte trængselstid for alle landets teologer.

Hvad skal der blive af en karetmager, når folk ikke længere kører i karet?

Har teologerne lyst til at trylle en frelser op af en tom pose, da dem om det. Men det bør ikke ske på det offentliges regning, og slet ikke til skade for borgernes forstand og universitetets efterhånden meget blakkede omdømme.

En rektor, der ikke griber ind, når der for offentlige midler fabuleres flittigt om et fantom, der aldrig har levet, men alligevel gik på vandet, kunne passende putte sin kæde - eller sig selv - i en af de mange tomme teologiske poser.

[20-07-2019] Lio Spiegler in conversation with Dr. Christian Lindtner and Dr. Michael Laitman

[06-07-2019] Kirkeministerens største problembarn

Af Chr. Lindtner. Bragt i Frederiksborg Amts Avis d. 05-07-2019.

Man kan vel tænke sig, at den nye kirkeminister, snart mor som hun er til et barn med en ukendt fader, dermed besidder den bedste betingelse for at forstå, først Maria, også ung mor og som Joy, en slags jomfru, dernæst, Marias enestående barn, måske verdens største problembarn - Jesus, også kaldet Kristus, Emmanouël, Nazaræeren, Menneskesønnen m.m.m.

Drengebarnet havde ikke kun een men mange fædre, de fleste meget berømte: kong David, stamfar Abraham, Gud i himlen, og Josef, også Davids søn - og andre, herunder den "hellige vind", der mirakuløst skaffede sig adgang til den jomfruelige moders indre liv - som om Helligånden dermed forsøgte at efterligne selveste Zeus, alle menneskers og guders fader i himlen.

I Danmark har vi lige siden 1849 en evangelisk-luthersk kirke, med ca. 20000 ansatte. Denne forsamling lever af på mange måder at udbrede den himmelråbende og absurde tro på jomfrumoderens eventyrlige vidunderbarn. De mest fornuftige præster ved selvfølgelig godt, at denne knægt aldrig har sat sine ben på denne jord. Han er som alle andre guder og gudesønner et produkt af menneskelig fantasi, som en havmand og en havfrue.

Danske biskopper følger stadig i hælene på en tysker ved navn Luther, der havde den

frækhed at påstå, at Jesus var en historisk person, både menneske og gud. Han kunne frelse hele verden, og han stod op af graven til nyt liv efter først at være død. Derfra fløj han til himlen, op til sin blodtørstige far, hvor han stadig sidder og kigger ned til os alle. I så mange år har så mange troet, at de døde snart stod op fra graven. Til dato er det aldrig sket for nogen!

Biskoppernes hovedopgave er nu, at narre flest muligt til at tro på alle disse fabler, og til dette formål har Fyns biskop på kollegernes vegne netop udsendt et par småskifter om de to vigtigste sakramenter, dåb og nadver. Begge handler om vidunderbarnet.

Pjecerne, som er bekostet af det offentlige, og som enhver kan rekvirere på det lokale kirkekontor, er - af en provst - blevet betegnet som skandaløse, hvormed han mener, at de er skrevet i et indforstået teologsprog, som lægfolk ikke fatter.

Det er sandt, men værre er det, at de er skrevet ud fra den usande forudsætning, at Menneskesønnen er en historisk person af kød og blod. Frækt hævdes det, at hans far personligt besøger alle danske kirker hver søndag! De to propagandahæfter er blevet til i et - kostbart - samarbejde med en lang række professionelle universitetsteologer. Hele formålet dermed er at narre så mange almindelige danskere til at tro på eksistensen af en person, der aldrig har eksisteret. Til at gennemføre en sådan opgave giver universitetsteologien som fag fine forudsætninger - her lærer man nemlig at snyde og fordreje.

Flere teologer har allerede ladet Joy Mogensen forstå, at de foretrækker, at hun holder fingrene væk og ikke rører ved deres privilegier.

I denne situation stilles der meget store krav til en kirkeminister, der ikke vil gå på akkord. En ung pige skal pludselig være en gammel, tung dreng!

Den unge minister er blot bachelor i "kultur- og sprogkunde", et kunstigt modefag, der ikke kvalificerer hende til at tage kampen op mod den bedre udrustede bande af biskopper.

Skulle hun have den mindste udsigt til at afsløre biskoppernes fup og bedrag, måtte hun ikke blot selv besidde kundskaber i de gamle sprog, græsk, hebraisk, latin og, især, pali og sanskrit. Desuden i almindelig religionshistorie og gematri samt kabbala. Endelig måtte hun have den modenhed og den menneskekundskab, der kun følger med et langt livs erfaringer.

I lyset af de dystre udsigter skal der altså nok et veritabelt mirakel til at der bliver ryddet op i den folkekirkelige redelighed i denne omgang!

Læserbrev af Chr. Lindtner. Bragt i Frederiksberg Amts Blad d. 31 maj 2019.

Kirkefondet, en af landets mange centraler for luthersk propaganda, har netop udsendt en pamflet med fokus på dåben. Det er klart, at de teologiske forfattere selv er i dyb vildrede m.h.t. betydningen af dette ældgamle ritual. Derfor gives aben nu videre til det folk, der ejer og tilhører kirken, og aflønner teologerne for deres hjælpeløse vankundighed.

Der er allerede noget komisk over Jesu egen dåb; han kommer til Johannes, kendt for at døbe, men Johannes fatter ikke, hvorfor Jesus kommer, mener tværtimod, at det er ham selv, der trænger til at blive døbt. Jesus insisterer og fremsætter den dybt gådefulde påstand, at således bør vi opfylde al retfærdighed. Efter en hurtig dukkert i flodens vand, daler en due ned fra himlen, og Guds røst sanktionerer den løjerlige hændelse.

Det er altså ikke så sært, at vore præster falder ned fra lastvognen, når man udbeder sig en fornuftig redegørelse.

Det er en skam, at sortkjoerne ikke vil høre om den indiske buddhisme, for her får gåderne deres historiske løsning. Hvad evangelisterne skriver, er oversat, ofte ordret, men med udeladelser, der afføder den herskende forvirring. Vi får kun den halve, og derfor forvirrende, fortælling.

Efter længe at have mediteret ved floden, opnåede Buddha den erkendelse, som "opfylder al retfærdighed". Citat ordret! Derefter forkyndte han sin lære og lod sine tilhængere optage i menigheden. Det skete derved, at man bekendte sin tro på Buddha, Læren og Ordenen - frit oversat til Faderen, Sønnen og Helligånden. Den gådefulde kristne Treenighed er umiskendeligt buddhismens Tre Juveler.

Også duen fra himlen får nu sin forklaring, idet den netop er et symbol på optagelsen i den buddhistiske orden. De indiske ord for opdagelse, dåb og optagelse staves omtrent som på græsk.

Et læserbrev er ikke stedet til at undervise begyndere i sanskrit. Dog er det ikke uoverkommeligt for en dansk præst at anskaffe sig gode lærebøger i de gamle indiske sprog. Med tiden vil præsten da kunne overbevise sig selv og menigheden om, at det egentlige formål med den mystiske dåb er at tilslutte sig den indiske buddhisme.

Den elskede søn er Guds søn - oversat fra sanskrit: deva-putras. Hos inderne anvendes det om halvguder og trolde, der bl.a. kan flyve i luften og gå på vandet. Ligesom Jesus.

[03-06-2019] Danish Queen visits Herning to celebrate Jesus illusion along with creepy bishops

[17-04-2019] Langfredags mørke og andre eventyr

Af Chr. Lindtner. Bragt i Frederiksborg Amts Avis d. 17-04-2019.

Ifølge folkekirkens forståelse af langfredag er denne dag, hvor mørket sænkede sig over hele Jorden, og Jesus led døden på korset, en sorgens dag. Men hvad siger de originale kilder, hvoraf flere nu kan læses på internettet?

Da jeg i 1982 blev doktor i buddhistisk filologi, var det umuligt at finde en dansk forlægger, der vovede at udgive nogle af de buddhistiske kilder til Det Nye Testamente, som jeg havde opdaget under mine studier i sanskrit og pâli. Situationen er i 2019 en ganske anden, idet enhver kan klikke ind på en oversættelse af Lotus Sûtra, der indeholder et væld af kilder, der senere dukker op i forb.m. Jesus. Læser man kapitel 11 af LS ser man snart, at Matthæus 27,31, har øst stof fra LS- Lotusevangeliet. Jesu fire ord fra korset stammede oprindeligt fra en Buddha, der sad inde i en stupa, der skød op fra jorden, som korset på det ukendte sted Golgata. På sanskrit lyder de: Sâdhu,sâdhu, Bhagavan Sâkyamune. De oversættes til aramaisk Elí, Elí, leamá sabaktáni, derfra til græsk, og derfra til dansk: Min Gud, Min Gud! Hvorfor har du forladt mig?

Vi læser så, at forhængen i templet flængedes i to dele fra øverst til nederst. I LS står der, at stupaens forside blev åbnet i to fra nederst til øverst. Formålet var, at man ville se, hvem der havde råbt de fire ord inde fra stupaen (buddhistisk gravmæle). Så skælver jorden, klipperne revner, gravene springer op, og mange af de hensovede helliges legemer står op; de stiger op fra gravene og går ind i den hellige by (LS, kap. 14). I LS læser man her om jordskælv, om klipper, der revner, og om utallige hellige mænd, der står op og går hen til stupaen, hvorfra den gamle Buddha lod sin røst høre. Folk omkring kalder Jesus for Guds søn, og samme betegnelse anvendes om alle Buddhaer (på sanskrit: devaputras). Matthæus taler om mørket over hele Jorden og tiden indtil den niende time. Mørket over hele Jorden, som aldrig fandt sted, stammer fra et andet kendt buddhistisk evangelium (Mahâpa-rinirvânasûtram), hvor der ikke tales om en niende time, men om et niende trin i buddhistisk meditation inden døden.

Langfredags begivenheder er altså hentet fra den indiske buddhisme, og det samme gælder de fleste af de begivenheder, folkekirken stadig forbinder med påske, for eksempel det sidste måltid. De fleste præster, jeg taler med, vil slet ikke høre om de buddhistiske kilder, der ligger til grund for den danske folkekirke. Men der er lykkeligvis hæderlige undtagelser. I det netop udkomne nummer af Kirkebladet for Tømmerby, Lild og Lild Strand, kan man således for første gang på dansk læse om »Buddhismens sidste nadver«. Dette hellige sakramente har tydeligvis også buddhistiske rødder. Danske præster kan en smule hebraisk og græsk, men det er ikke nok til at give sig selv og menighederne et troværdigt begreb om kristendommens indiske rødder. Uden sanskrit og pâli er og bliver en folkekirkepræst en halvstuderet røver!

[01-03-2019] Tømmerby Sogns kirkeblad marts-maj: Buddhismens sidste nadver af Chr. Lindtner

[10-02-2019] Is Christianity Buddhism for the West? Chr. Lindtner interviewed by Jan Lamprecht on historyreviewed.com

[08-02-2019] Chr. Lindtner joins the Brian Ruhe Show

[25-01-2019] IN MEMORIAM DR. HERMANN DETERING (1953-2018)

Det er med sorg, at vi erfarer, at den tyske teolog Dr. Hermann Detering i oktober 2018 er afgået ved døden. Dr. Detering vil blive husket for sin i lutheransk sammenhæng usædvanlige kildekritiske holdning til studiet af Det Nye Testamente.

Hans mange lærde arbejder er samlet på den af ham selv redigerede hjemmeside RadikalKritik. I modsætning til tyske universitetsteologer i almindelighed, anså Detering ikke Jesus for at være en historisk person, men derimod en mytologisk figur som utallige andre gudesønner i antikken.

I 2014 optrådte Detering i en fjernsynsdebat - JESUS: MYTHOS UND WARHEIT - HISTORY LIVE. Hans to modstandere var professionelle teologer, Dr. Klaus Wengst fra Bochum, og Annette Merz fra Heidelberg og Groningen. Lytter man opmærksomt til de to teologer, vil man bemærke, at de ikke kan begrunde deres tro på en historisk Jesus videnskabeligt. De taler begge til stadighed om SANDSYNLIGHED. Men sandsynlighed er blot et tomt ord i deres mund, akkurat som når talen er om professionelle danske universitetsteologer. Der er blot tale om tro og meninger, ikke om viden. Dertil kommer, at deres "videnskabelige tro" tilmed er latterlig. Den tro, der bliver tilbage, når disse komiske figurer har fjernet alt det absurde og overtroiske, er nærmest en småtosset jøde, der forventede verdens snarlige undergang; denne særling håbede på bedre tider, måske, men endte med selv at blive korsfæstet!

Sådan omtrent tegner billedet sig af "den historiske Jesus" blandt universitetsteologer

i både Danmark og Tyskland. Som altid er der plads til lærd uenighed omkring småtterier. Men der er ikke plads til at læse de buddhistiske kilder til korsfæstelsen af den Jesus, der aldrig har eksisteret. Disse snakkehoveder er ikke blot latterlige, men også uredelige. Som man kan se på Dr. Deterings hjemmeside, nåede han til den overbevisning, at den tidlige kristendom havde rødder i den form for indisk buddhisme, der kaldes Mahâyâna. Denne overbevisning havde han fået ved studiet af Thundys og Lockwoods arbejder, der især byggede på Lindtners. Når jeg taler om den tyske og danske universitetsteologis uredelighed, så mener jeg hermed meget præcist, at disse fupmagere forsømmer at gå ad fontes. Alle tyske og danske teologer ved, at jeg har peget på eksistensen af buddhistiske kilder til Det Nye Testamente.

Dr. Detering var, i modsætning til næsten alle sine teologiske kolleger, ærlig nok til ikke at ignorere eller fordreje kilderne, der danner grundlag for fortællingerne om den fiktive Kristus fra Bethlehem - eller var det Nazaret, eller Nagarât i Indien? Man forsøger altså, at undertrykke den videnskabelige frihed og pligten til at gå til de primære kilder. Når jeg hører om tyske teologer kan jeg ikke lade være med at tænke på andre ubehagelige tyske typer - først nazister, så kommunister. Dr. Detering har reddet en del af den moderne tyske teologis ære. Det samme gælder den mest betydelige af hans forgængere, filosofen Arthur Drews, som man kan læse mere om på Deterings hjemmeside. Dr. Detering burde have været indbudt til at forelæse i både København og Aarhus, og de danske universiteter burde have tildelt en doktorhat, *honoris causa*. Det skete aldrig.

Lad mig slutte med at gentage, at de mest lærde teologer pt. er nogenlunde enige om at tro på en historisk Jesus, der nok var en sindsforvirret jødisk mirakelmager, men også en småkriminell, der endte på korset. Heldigvis er det kun en sandsynlighed, en tro, en mening - altså sludder og vrøvl.

- Christian Lindtner

[18-01-2019] Folkekirke, fup og fidus

Nedenstående kronik blev bragt i Frederiksborg Amts Avis d. 16 januar 2019.

Af Chr. Lindtner mag.art. & dr.phil.

Tovesvej 6, Nærum

Med biskopperne i spidsen taler præsterne som regel med to tunger. I kirken prædiker præsten om et barn, der blev født i Betlehem, som kunne gå på vandet, flyve op i luften osv. Hans mor var jomfru og han selv stod op fra de døde, m.m.

Læser man teologi på universitetet, fortæller »videnskabelige teologer«, at det slet ikke passer, hvad præsten prædiker! I en lille bog, som teologilektor Kasper Bro Larsen

netop har udsendt under Aarhus Universitets auspicer, lærer vi, at Jesus nok ikke blev født i Betlehem, men i Nazaret, og at næsten alle de ting der ellers fortælles om ham i kirken, er opfundet af hans fantasifulde disciple senere hen.

Selvom vor eneste kilde, evangelisterne, er helt upålidelige vidner, så har lektor Larsen alligevel den frækhed at påstå, at Jesu korsfæstelse er en historisk realitet.

Men med denne påstand føres læseren bag lyset, idet universitetsteologer efterhånden godt ved, at det er en religionshistorisk kendsgerning, at vore upålidelige evangelister har stjålet historien om korsfæstelsen fra forskellige buddhistiske kilder, som enhver nu kan opspore på nettet. Og når det gælder dåb, nadver, lignelser m.m., er der påviseligt også tale om evangeliske tyvekoster. Således afløses fup i kirken af fidus på universitetet. Den videnskabelige teologis hovedopgave er således at uddanne præster til at fortælle historier, der ikke passer, dvs. til at blive hyklere. Frygten for, at tomme kirker medfører tomme teologlommer, er stor.

Da Georg Brandes i 1925 hævdede, at Jesus blot var fri fantasi, blev han mødt af et teologisk raseri, der endnu ikke har lagt sig. At Jesus aldrig har eksisteret, er jo ensbetydende med, at teologi må nedlægges som universitetsfag. Man ansætter jo ikke mange hundrede teologer til at behage sig i futile fantasistudier. Når teologer derfor fastholder »en historisk Jesus«, betyder det blot, at de kæmper for deres faste stillinger. En historisk Jesus er universitetsteologiens daglige brød, om han nu er en terrorist, en tosset rabbiner, en stratenrøver med storhedsvanvid eller hvad.

Christian 7. foreslog i et lyst øjeblik, at kirkerne blev omdannet til kornkamre, og var Struensee ikke blevet henrettet på Østre Fælled april 1772, så havde han måske haft held til at få bortvist teologien fra universitetet, hvor dette svindelfirma overhovedet ikke hører hjemme. Teologerne åndede lettet op, da den udmærkede mand blev parteret på fælleden.

Netop nu oplyser folkekirken.dk, at biskopperne har været samlet til det første af årets tre møder, hvor der skal snakkes om samarbejde, sorg, dannelse, og om at tage et kik på folkekirkens kommunikation. Snak, snak, snak.

For mig er det en kilde til megen sorg, at danske biskopper savner den dannelse, der skal til for redeligt at erindre befolkningen om at historien har gentaget sig: Christian 3. afskedigede jo de katolske biskopper idet deres loyalitet over for riget kunne ligge på rumpen af en flue. Den moderne universitetsteologi er en udklækningsanstalt for statsfinansieret fup og fidus i største stil.

Skal folkekirken overleve, må evangeliske menneskefluer snarest se at få rettet op på misforholdene.

Chr. Lindtner her i samtale med Povl H. Riis Knudsen om kristendommens rødder. Samtalen blev først bragt på podcasten Nordens Grænse, hvor den stadig er at finde.

<http://www.nordensgraense.com/kristendommens-roedder-25-08-2018/>

[15-09-2018] Billeder af profeter og budskaber fra engle

[19-07-2018] Kalmar Gronvall interviews Christian Lindtner.

[14-06-2018] Christian 'Cross' - Buddhist 'Truth'

Good and pious Christians are expected to carry, show, and meditate on the cross associated with the Christ, his suffering, his release from suffering, and his so-called resurrection. To understand that in so doing they are actually offering worship to the Buddhist Noble Truth, they must first know the Greek term for a 'cross', viz, stauros. They must then know that each Greek name is also a number, and that the number of stauros is 1271 ($s + t + a + u + r + o + s = 200 + 300 + 1 + 400 + 100 + 70 + 200 = 1271$).

The next step is to draw 1271 as a circle, as a square, as an octagon, as a pentagram, as a triangle, etc., etc. The number 1271 is now represented as visual forms, often termed sacred geometry.

As for Buddhism, the same rules apply. Ancient Buddhism (Theravādo, rather than Theravāda) worships ariya-saccam, the number of which is 404 ($1 + 100 + 10 + 10 + 1 + 200 + 1 + 20 + 20 + 1 + 40 = 404$), of which there are four sorts (listed below).

Other schools, using Sanskrit, worship ārya-satyam, 'Noble Truth'. The number of ā-r-y-a-s-a-t-y-a-m is $2 + 100 + 10 + 1 + 200 + 1 + 300 + 10 + 1 + 40 = 665$.

Now draw stauros as a 1271 circle, and it will be seen that the four times ariyasaccam add up to ca. 1618, which is the cross consisting of four diameters, each of which represents one ariyasaccam. The number 1.6180339... is familiar to all as the value of the so-called Golden Ratio.

The fourth ariya-saccam is said to be the path leading to the end of suffering – in Pāli: dukkha-nirodha- gāminī patipad. When one counts, the number will be 1271, the same as stauros. This indicates that the stauros not only has to do with suffering, but also with the end of suffering.

Thus the Christian cross becomes a silent symbol of the ariya-saccam that is the path to the end of suffering. It makes sense that the cross is a symbol of suffering, but also of

the cessation of suffering.

When one adds up the numbers of the four diameters of the circle and the cross, one lands on ca. 2888, which is the number of 'The Kingdom of the Heavens', 'hê basileia tôn ouranôn'. To speak of the Kingdom of God, or of the Heavens is another way of speaking of the end of suffering.

Draw then the 665 circle of the Sanskrit synonym ārya-satyam. The six diameters, or two inscribed hexagons, add up to 1271 = stauros. Such six diameters can, of course, be drawn as four, so as to form a normal cross. One may now draw 1271 as an equilateral triangle inscribed in a 1536 circle.

In order to solve this puzzle, one must turn to The Lotus Gospel. There, in chapter XI, one will meet an old Buddha calling from inside a stūpa up in the air. This is the obvious source of the Messiah calling from the cross as reported by the New Testament Gospels. The crucifixion episode in the New Testament is a purely literary fabrication made up by combining words and events found in Buddhist and Jewish sources. Hence, it has nothing to do with history in the sense of what actually happened.

The name of this old Buddha is given as Prabhūta-ratnas, and his number is 1536. Thus the Greek stauros is related to Prabhūtaratnas. The 1271 stauros is seen as an equilateral triangle in the 1536 circle of Prabhūta-ratnas.

If one reads chapter XI of the Lotus, one will be able to make further observations leaving no doubt whatsoever about the Buddhist source.

Since Christians worship the man on the cross, they thus actually worship not only Prabhūta-ratnas, but also the legendary sage Gautama(s), said to be the founder of the Buddha's royal dynasty. This fact was pointed out many years ago.

When drawn as a circle, the ca. 1271 stauros contains an inscribed octagon that is ca. 1236. If one multiplies 1236 by 1.618 x 1.618 x 1.618, one lands on the number 5236, which is the sum of the four sorts of ariya-saccam, as can be seen here:

$$\text{dukkham ariyasaccam} = 485 + 404 = 889$$

$$\text{dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccam} = 1142 + 404 = 1546$$

$$\text{dukkhanirodham ariyasaccam} = 720 + 404 = 1124$$

$$\text{dukkha-nirodha-gāminī patipad ariyasaccam} = 1271 + 404 = 1675.$$

Thus four sorts of ariyasaccam add up to 5234. If one reads patipadā for patipad, the number will be 5236, which, as said, is $1236 \times 2.618 \times 1.618$.

Note that when one draws the 2670 (= 1546 + 1124) circle, then the inscribed pentagram will be 404.238×10 , which thus confirms ariyasaccam. Note also that Buddhist scholars, failing to recognize the Greek geometry and syntax, have been puzzled by the apparently irregular forms samudayam and nirodham.

The fundamental concept of Theravādo is paticcasamuppādo = 1309. And four times 1309 is 5236. In John 14:6, Jesus identifies himself with these Buddhist concepts by saying that he is:

hê hodos kai hê alêtheia kai hê zôê. The number of these eight words is precisely 1309. Thus, Jesus identifies himself with "Buddhism", as defined by the familiar abstract concepts: the (Middle) Way, the (Noble) Truth, and the (Eternal) Life.

Has there ever been a single Christian in this world who did not set his hope on so-called resurrection?

The absurdities normally associated with physical – and even spiritual – resurrection are well known and need not be mentioned here. Who has ever noticed the dead getting up from their graves!

Now look at the numbers: the Number of *hê anastasis*, ‘the resurrection’, is $8 + 963 = 971$. Now multiply 971 by 1.309 (one half of 2.618), and one will land on 1271 – *stauros*. In itself 971 is $6 \times 161.83333\dots$, and thus an obvious symbol of the Golden Ratio. Look then at the number 1271, and ask why the ancients considered it so significant: The 1271 *stauros* is a word that refers to the mathematical fact that: $3 \times 423.6666 = 1271$. And 423.666 is $161.8 \times 2.618\dots$. In other words: ‘the worship of the Cross’ and ‘the worship of the Noble Truth, is the worship of what some modern scholars have called ‘the number of life’, the *divina proportio*, etc.

As mentioned above, the number of *dukkham* is 485. The Greek authors were aware of that, and must have chosen that term with 1271 in mind, for when one multiplies ca. 485 by 2.618..., one lands on 1271.

Even more sophisticated: There are eight “correct” views etc. The number of *sammâ* is 283. Since there are eight, we get $8 \times 283 = 2264$. Divide then 2264 by 1271, giving one 1.7812. If one reads that as 17-8-12, one will see that the 8 refers to the eight kinds of *sammâ*. And that the 17-12 may be read as 1271, the number of *stauros*.

Note likewise that the number of *dukkhasamudayam* is 1142. Keeping the 1271 circle in mind, the inscribed square will be 1135 – NOT, as might be expected or hoped for, 1142. So 1142 is the “wrong number”; and thus becomes the origin of suffering!

Note also that when one adds $485 + 1142 + 720 + 1271$ (above, defining *ariyasaccam*), one lands on 3618, which is 1618 plus 2000 ($= 1618 \times 1.236$). One may also draw 485 + 720 as the 1205 square inscribed in the 1337.5 circle. If one then divides 1337.55 by 1.05236 (above, for *Prabhûtaratnas*, etc.), one will again land on exactly 1271.

When one multiplies 404.5, for *ariyasaccam*, by 1.2, one will again land on 485.4. But the number expected should be 485, the number of *dukkham*. So, *dukkham* obviously also has the meaning of “not quite accurate”.

The Pāli noun of truth is *saccam*; and the number of *saccam* is 282, or 283 (with the -a- before two consonants is taken as long by position; same rule applies above for *ariyasaccam* as 404 or 405, or 404.5).

The noun *saccam* was most probably coined in order to remind us of 282..., i.e. $2 \times 141.4\dots$. Thus, 141.4213... is the radius in the 888 circle of Jesus, and in the 889 circle of *Buddho Bhagavā*. The $8 \times \text{sammā}$ ($= \text{ca. } 283 \text{ or } 282.8$) can now be seen as the eight diameters in the 888 / 889 circle.

According to modern scholarship, the ‘Buddha’ is a historical person who may have lived somewhere up in the mountains, long before Alexander the Great reached India. There are now two options: Either the ‘Buddha’ has nothing to do with *ariyasaccam* and *āryasatyam*. But how can one have a Buddha who had nothing to do with *ariyasaccam*, etc.! That would boil down to a Buddha without Buddhism!

There is an alternative. The analysis given above has pointed out that the authors of *ariyasaccam* / *āryasatyam* were highly competent scholars of Greek, Sanskrit and Pāli, but also experts in Greek geometry. In addition to that, the entire presentation of the Noble Truth is presented as a myth where gods, etc., play an important role.

Should any modern scholar insists on believing in a “historical Buddha”, he would also

have to admit, that such an author of ariyasaccam / āryasatyam, was also a great expert of several languages, as well as Greek geometry.

Buddhist scholarship, ancient as well as modern, that ignores the Greek background is bound to get lost. The divina proportio is a profound principle, as the Lord admitted to himself in Mahāvaggo 1, 5, 2, etc.:

adhigato kho myāyam dhammo gambhīro duddaso duranubodho santo panīto
atakkācacaro nipuno panditavedanīyo.

Now read these words with Greek eyes so that adhigato gives one 389, etc. When one adds them all up, one will land on 6472, which is 4×1618 .

The architects of the Parthenon have used the Golden Ratio long before its secrets were exported to India. Here, it 'first became known as "the profound Dhammo" ', etc. Taken as a whole, the Mahāvaggo is a sort of 'textual temple'. The idea that God expresses himself in numbers is typically Greek.

Chr. Lindtner

[04-05-2018] Biskopperne blevet overflødige

Bragt 20. april 2018 i Frederiksborg Amts Avis. Af Chr. Lindtner Mag. art. & dr. phil.

Når jeg nu læser, at Præsteforeningen kræver en meget betragtelig lønforhøjelse til de i forvejen højtlønnede biskopper, kommer jeg til at tænke på, hvordan Frederik den Store reagerede på et lignende krav fra prøjsiske gejstlige: Han undrede sig over modtagelsen af fordringen, al den stund han mente, at præsterne var tilfredse med at få deres løn i himlen.

Biskoppernes opgave er primært at holde øje med, at præsterne forkynder evangeliet.

Det evangelium, de har at forkynde, synes, når man studerer kirkelivet og Præsteforeningens hjemmeside, m. m. m. nærmest at handle om løn og pension og lign. verdslige materier. Det er som om, himmerige og lønkonto er synonymmer! Folkekirken er blevet så grådig og verdslig, at den har mistet sin eksistensberettigelse.

Siden reformation i 1536 har det påhvilet biskopper at bekæmpe sekter, der ikke delte Luthers syn på evangeliet, dvs. navnlig islam og jødedom, men også »sværmere«. Vil nogen mene, at det ikke længere er deres pligt? Det forekommer mig, at folkets kirker i dag gerne hjemsøges af, hvad man før i tiden ville kalde »sværmere«. Eksempelvis trækker en meget omtalt journalist, der hævder at have mødt Jesus, stadig fulde kirkehuse med sine fantasier. Og som alle ved, lokker præsterne folk til med musik, måltider, udstillinger, verdslige foredrag osv., der hverken har med evangeliet eller Luther at gøre.

Men det mest misliebige af alt er vel nok, at hele folkekirkens gejstlighed lever højt på at illudere, at blot man tror, så vil man blive frelst af Jesus.

De kvikkeste præster, jeg har mødt, ved udmærket godt, at der ikke er noget, der tyder på, at Jesus overhovedet er en historisk person.

De ved udmærket godt, at der er tale om myter, at Jesus er en gudesøn som Apollon og Hermes og mange andre produkter af digternes fantasi. De ved ligeledes, at der ikke er meget troværdigt, at finde i den såkaldte trosbekendelse.

Ansaret for at dette kirkelige abespil fortsætter, ligger i sidste instans hos landets biskopper.

Jeg har aldrig hørt nogen dansk biskop indrømme åbent og ærligt, at man dermed holder folket for nar.

Men det gør man.

Dette er udtryk for en dyb uredelighed, der næppe går bort, blot man beder om »syndernes forladelse«. Her i landet er der mange mennesker, der hungre efter åndelig føde. Mange præster går endog til psykolog; de kan åbenbart ikke helbrede deres egne sjæle! Biskopperne prætenderer at være de højeste autoriteter i åndelige anliggender.

De har dog intet at byde på.

Nogle af dem har tilmed ansat teologiske rådgivere.

Det tyder dog på åndelig rådvildhed? En af grundene til at Christian 3. afsatte og fængslede de katolske biskopper i 1536 var den, som han sagde, at deres loyalitet overfor riget kunne ligge på et meget lille sted - på rumpen af en flue, for at citere reformationskongen ordret.

Da jeg ikke kan se, at meget har forandret sig siden dengang, har disse og lignende overvejelser om historien, der gentager sig, ført mig til den konklusion, at vore biskopper er ganske overflødige, og at deres lønkrav er udtryk for en grådighed, der stadfæster den verdslighed, som vi var bedst foruden.

Biskopperne prætenderer at være de højeste autoriteter i åndelige anliggender.

De har dog intet at byde på.

[19-04-2018] Son of David in the Kapilavastu "Synagogue"

The Saṅgha-Bheda-Vastu (SBV) is a source of numerous passages in the Greek New Testament, and no serious scholar of Christianity can afford to ignore the SBV as well as other Buddhist sources in Sanskrit and Pāli. Already on the first pages of the SBV we find some of the sources not only of the episode Matthew 22:41-46, but also the clue to the real identity of the so-called "Matthew", as well as the home of Jesus of Nazaret and

Kapharnaoum. Here are the main points: The Lord is staying in Kapilavastu. The citizens of Kapilavastu have assembled in their “synagogue”. They ask themselves: “From where are we Śākyas born?” Unable to answer that question they turn to the Lord. He knows the answer, but not wishing to appear to be boasting of his own origin, he orders his disciple MahāMaudgalyāyanas, who has been sitting, meditating in the assembly, to tell the story. Any scholar who reads the Greek and the original Sanskrit aloud to himself, will have no problem in recognizing the Sanskrit behind the Greek. The Sanskrit begins with an absolute genitive: “While many citizens of Kapilavastu were gathered together in the synagogue”. The incident reported in Matthew 22:41-46 copies the absolute genitive: “While the Pharisees were gathered together”. Comment: The citizens of Kapilavastu have been transformed into the Pharisees. One has to go elsewhere to locate the “synagogue” of Kapharnaoum. Behind Kapharnaoum we have Kapila-vastu. John 6:59 ... en sunagōgē ... en Kapharnaoum. These ten syllables are a direct rendering of the ten syllables at the very beginning of the SBV (p. 5) ... Kapilavastuni ... samsthāgāre. In the SBV, the citizens of Kapilavastu then ask the Lord about about what they have to answer in case someone asks them: ‘Kuto nirjātā bhavantaḥ Śākyāḥ?’ = ‘From where are you Śākyas born?’ In Matthew 22:42 these ten syllables are put into the mouth of the Lord, where the question now runs: ti humin dokei peri tou Khristou?; “What do you think about the Christ?” In the Sanskrit, the Lord will not answer the question, for the reason already given: He does not wish to boast about his own origin. It is up to “Matthew” to do so by relating the story now known as the Gospel according to Matthew. In the Greek it is the Pharisees who cannot answer the question, and the Lord, the Christ, who – for reasons not given – will not answer the question about origins! In other words: One must know the Sanskrit source in order to solve the puzzle in the Greek. This sort of puzzle occurs so frequently in the New Testament that it may be considered typical: Without the original Sanskrit or Pāli source, the sayings and parables of Jesus will remain mysteries. Matthew then puts words from the Old Testament in the mouth of the Lord. It is a paradox: How can the Christ be son as well as Lord in relation to David? The Pharisees cannot answer the question, and the reason is that they do not know gematria:

The number of Christ, Khristos is 1480. The number of son, huios is 680; and the number of kurios, Lord is 800. That Christ = 1480, here, shows that he is a good mathematician: huios + kurios = 1480 = Khristos. On the following page of the SBV (p. 6), the Lord then, as said, invites his disciple, MahāMaudgalyāyanas, who is sitting in the assembly, to raise and tell the story - the one we now primarily know from Matthew. The seven syllables of Ma-hā-Maud-gal-yā-ya-nas are then transformed into the seven syllables of Matthew 9:9: Maththaion legomenon. The nominative would be: Math-thai-os lego-me-nos, also seven syllables, as in the Sanskrit original. The disciple, who in the Sanskrit story was sitting in the very same assembly, has thus, in the Greek version, been transformed into a man sitting at the custom house. There is a hidden pun here, and you must know the Sanskrit original to notice it: This “Matthew” is, in Luke, described as a collector of taxes. These “taxes” he gathered from the Sanskrit of SBV, we now know! Once again, an instance of the general rule: If you do not know the Sanskrit, you will never really know that it is a Greek “pirate copy”. Later on Ma-hā-Maud-gal-yā-ya-nas tells us about the city (nagaram), of Kapilavastu. At one point, the Lord leaves the city, giving us the form: -nagarāt (‘from the city’). In Matthew, once again, a transformation takes place: Kapila-vastu becomes Kapharnaoum (or,

equally valid spelling: Kaper-naoum. The ablative form -nagarāt becomes Nazaret(h). At the end of the nouns, vastu and naoum are synonyms, meaning place. Thus one original location becomes two different locations in the 'pirate copy'! If one takes the trouble to collect what the New Testament Gospels have to say about Kaphar-naoum and Nazaret(h) – again various spellings (all correct, we now see) – and then compares that with what the SBV and other Buddhist sources have to report about Kapilavastu-nagara(m/t/e), it will be quite obvious that the Greek, in all respects, is a pirate copy of the Sanskrit and Pāli. For instance, the incident about the centurion and his tortured boy (ho pais), reported in Matthew 8:5-13, can easily be traced back to the SBV (p. 196). It was originally the king of Kapilavastu and his boy – the so-called 'Buddha'. Matthew 1:1 identifies the Christ with the son of David. This refers to the Old Testament, of course, but also links up with the Sanskrit deva-putras, son of Deva(s). The noun devas also means 'god', and so Christ is not only 'son of David' but also of 'God'. As usual, one must know the Sanskrit to avoid being confused. As the old Buddhist saying goes: It is easier for a camel, etc., than it is for a bishop to enter the New Testament without being competent in Sanskrit and Pāli. There is a common saying in the SBV that one becomes many, and that many becomes one. Without keeping this principle in mind, it is impossible to understand what went on in the mind of these unknown authors. The idea of one or many gods transforming themselves is very ancient among the Indians and the Greeks. From that point of view, there is nothing strange in, say, Buddhō Bhagavā (whose number is 889) becoming transformed so as to turn up under the name of Jesus, whose number is 888. Conclusion: Matthew is the first book in the New Testament. Nothing is known about "Matthew" as a "historical person". We now know why. His story started: Kapilavastuni . . . samsthāgāre, in the "synagogue" in Kapilavastu. Monks – Buddhist and Christian – are still making a modest living by showing Kapilavastu and Kapharnaoum and Nazaret(h) to naïve tourists. But – bad luck – none of these places were ever on the map. They are, just as the euaggelion (= sūtram) as a whole, the product of pia fraus. Note: In this paper I have ignored the gematria common to the Sanskrit and the Greek. For instance, John 6:59 describes the Lord as teaching (didaskōn) in the Kapharnaoum synagogue. The numerical value of didaskōn is 1089. In the Sanskrit, the Lord is Buddhas + Bhagavān = 612 + 459, adding up to 1071. Draw the 1089 circle of didaskōn, and the inscribed decagon will be found to be 1071. The teacher in question, is of course, the Messiah, whose number is 'ho Messiah' = 726. But 726 is the 'fish' in the 1089 circle of didaskōn (= 1089). (726 is 2/3 of 1089). Another nice example: John 1:1-18 consists of exactly 496 syllables, corresponding to the number of the epithet monogenēs, mentioned here in this textual unit. Now let 496 be the 'fish' in the 744 circle. Double up, and you land on the Sanskrit bodhisattvas = 1488. There are, as can be seen, many puns on bodhi-sattvas in the New Testament. That "John" was a true master of numerology (sacred geometry) has been firmly established by numerous other examples. The serious study of the New Testament MUST thus combine at least three (now and then four or five) ancient languages on a common geometrical basis, viz., Greek geometry. Otherwise, all one's endeavours to come to terms with the foundations of Christianity will be in vain.

[18-11-2017] Født af Jomfru Maria?

Biskop i Ribe grebet i bluf. At vore biskopper udgiver evangeliske eventyr for at være hellige kendsgerninger er efterhånden så hyppigt forekommende, at det ligner en fast lov, at de lever af at lyve fedt. Det seneste falske vidnesbyrd stammer fra Elof W., der p.t. poserer som biskop i Ribe. Her er Christian Lindtners kommentar i Jydske Vestkysten:

I forbindelse med mine studier af min forfader Hans Tausens embedstid som biskop i Ribe, faldt jeg over et indlæg fra Ribes nuværende biskop E. Westergaard, med overskriften: Født af Jomfru Maria. I dette indlæg (Kristeligt Dagblad 21/3/2015) anbefaler E. Westergaard, at man lader være med at stille fornuftige spørgsmål, men blot sluger den ubegribelige påstand om jomfrufødsel som et udtryk for et under eller mysterium. Han sætter dermed tro højt over viden - et yderst farligt råd, der kan have de mest uhyggelige følger. Efter en mundtlig overlevering i familien kan jeg se, at Hans Tausen ikke var så uansvarlig, men derimod pegede på en fornuftig løsning på gåden om moren, der også var jomfru. Hans Tausen var jo også professor i græsk, og han vidste, at alle græske ord også har talværdier, der fremkom derved, at man lagde værdien af hvert bogstav sammen. På denne måde har det græske ord for moren, tallet 464, og det græske ord for jomfru giver tallet 515. Tallet for hendes søn, Messias, er 656. Tegner man nu en cirkel med omkredsen 515 for jomfru, da ser man, at det indskrevne kvadrat har tallet, dvs. måler 464. Da en diameter i en cirkel med omkredsen 515 jo er 164, så betyder det, at fire diametre giver 656, tallet for Messias. En cirkel med omkredsen 515, med kvadratet 464 og med de fire diametre 656, giver altså en simpel og rationel forklaring på, at en jomfru også er eller var moren til Messias. At Messias er den samme som Jesus, ser man, når to indskrevne kvadrater sammenlagt bliver 928, hvilket på græsk er tallet for: Her er Jesus. Anders Sørensen Vedel - en anden kendt borger fra Ribe og ligeledes i familie med Tausen, skal efter mundtlig overlevering have tilføjet, at tallet for Nazaret også er 464. Dermed beviser cirklen med kvadratet og de fire diametre tillige, at både Messias og moren stammer fra Nazaret. Ribes nuværende biskop er ikke ene om at hævde, at de forskellige tilsyneladende absurde påstande, vi møder i trosbekendelsen, er udtryk for Guds under og mysterium. Dermed forvandler de Gud til et stort vrøvlehoved. For min forfader var Gud snarere en stor matematiker, der med sine gåder ville have os til at studere matematik - ikke til at gå fra forstanden. En biskop eller præst, der ignorerer evangeliets herlige gåder og paradokser, ville den gamle biskop sikkert have anset for at være dårlige kristne, øjenskalke med behov for en ordentlig gang reformation.

Biskop Marianne Gaarden & biskop Henrik Stubkjær

[24-10-2017] Det sidste store tabu

Læserbrev af Chr. Lindtner. Bragt i Lolland Falsters Folketidende, d. 24. oktober 2017.

For ikke så længe siden faldt jeg i snak med en ældre tagtækker, og spurgte interesseret til hans efterhånden sjældne håndværk, der jo kan give så smukke resultater. Høfligt spurgte han til mit eget håndværk, hvortil jeg forklarede, at jeg i årtier,

medens han gjorde sig nyttig ved at tække tage, havde grublet over spørgsmålet, om Jesus overhovedet havde eksisteret. Jeg mente, at have lært mit håndværk gennem mindst hundrede gange at have læst Det Nye Testamente ord for ord på det græske originalsprog. Til min overraskelse lo den kvikke tækker og svarede, at jeg nok havde spildt mange år på noget, "han allerede vidste i forvejen". Man må da have en skrue løs på øverste etage hvis man tror på det sludder om, at Jesus var søn af en jomfru, at han var på et kort besøg i helvede, og at han nu, efter at være vågnet op fra de døde, sidder oppe i skyerne ved siden af sin fader i himlen. Sådan omtrent var hans ord. Jeg skammede mig, måtte nok give tækkemanden medhold, og besluttede, at give aben videre til landets højeste autoriteter - biskopperne. I fl ere læserbreve i landets aviser stillede jeg det meget enkle spørgsmål:

Hvor sidder Kristus? Alle biskopper svarede med tavshed - bortset fra Lolland-Falsters nye biskop, Marianne Gaarden, der tilmed hilste mit spørgsmål velkomment (fredag 7. juli 2017), men dog ikke selv havde mod på at besvare det. I stedet blev jeg venligt henvist til lokale sognepræster og menigheder - til græsrødderne så at sige. Jeg behøvede ikke at efterkomme den elskværdige og undvigende henvisning, for den vandring havde jeg allerede foretaget mange søndage i mange år, men gjorde det alligevel.

Resultatet af de nye kirkegange var akkurat det samme som før: Alle adspurgte var enige om, at Trosbekendelsen er en samling af ubegribelige, absurde og utroværdige påstande, som intet moderne menneske længere kan tro på. På den anden side fandt jeg også en almindelig enighed om, at man ikke kan henlægge den ældgamle Trosbekendelse - som ingen tilmed vidste, hvor stammede fra - i det store skrin med fortidens forældede vrangforestillinger. Fjerner man trosbekendelsen, som man i sin tid fjernede djævluddrivelsen ved dåben, så fjerner man også selve grundlaget for gudstjenesten

og for den danske folkekirke. Sådan omtrent, kære biskop Gaarden, var udbyttet af mine mange andagtsfulde kirkegange. Jeg fatter logikken og må være enig med min tagtækker i, at folkekirken og dens ansatte nok lever på tynd is eller under et utæt tag. Mit spørgsmål til stiftets nye biskop - som jeg jo skylder et svar - må derfor være: Er biskoppen, der udtrykkeligt har sagt og skrevet, at hun i sit nye embede er glad for lægfolks interesse i folkekirkens anliggender, villig til at indbyde til en stor, åben og bred offentlig debat om temaet: Er tiden løbet fra folkekirkens trosbekendelse? Kort sagt: Har Jesus overhovedet eksisteret - eller er han blot et produkt af uvidenhed og fri og fromme fantasier? Jeg kan tænke mig, at min lune tagtækker også ser frem til svaret fra stiftets nye biskop. Jeg ved af mange års erfaring, at dette spørgsmål vil ingen folkekirkepræst tage op til diskussion. Det er det sidste store tabu.

[22-05-2017] Er Viborgs biskop en øjenskalk?

Læserbrev af Chr. Lindtner. Bragt i Viborg Stifts Folkeblad, d. 04. november 2017.

Den 6. april rettede jeg her i bladet et enkelt spørgsmål til stiftets biskop: Hvor sidder Kristus? Jeg har efterfølgende rettet samme spørgsmål i andre blade til landets øvrige biskopper, men den lange betænkningstid har endnu ikke affødt andet svar end dyb tavshed.

Øjenskalk er et godt dansk ord, som min forfader Hans Tausen anvendte til at oversætte den græske glose, der nu normalt gengives med hykler. Tausen tænkte især på katolske bisper, der sagde et, men mente noget andet; prælater, der ikke holdt sig tæt til det evangelium, hvorefter alt drejer sig i vor trosbekendelse. Trosbekendelsen er et lille ord af Guds egen mund, mente Grundtvig engang.

I håb om dermed at få brudt biskoppernes underfulde tavshed, stiller jeg et tillægsspørgsmål, der måske kan sætte lidt gang i den offentlige debat om trosbekendelsen, som biskopperne selv påstår, de inderligt savner. Spørgsmålet er nu: Er Hans moder, Maria, jomfru?

Hermed sigtes naturligvis til påstanden i trosbekendelsen, der siger, at Jesu moder, Maria, var en jomfru. Jeg har til dato ikke hørt nogen dansk biskop erklære, højt og klart, at det umuligt kan passe, at en moder, der har fået et barn, stadig er jomfru. Jeg gætter på, at biskoppen er enig med mig, men da jeg ikke er tankelæser, kan jeg ikke vide det med sikkerhed.

Derfor: Forkynder danske biskopper med læberne noget, de i deres indre slet ikke selv tror på? Med andre ord: Er betegnelsen øjenskalk den rette betegnelse for en typisk dansk biskop her og nu?

I bekræftende fald, er vi pludselig tilbage i Viborg, hvor Hans Tausen for snart 500 år siden, jo netop klandrede de katolske munke og bisper for at være hyklere og øjenskalke. En rigtig øjenskalk er den, der i forsamlingen mumler den apostolske trosbekendelse, men i sit indre slet ikke tror, hvad der lyder fra hans læber.

Er Viborgs biskop en øjenskalk?

[22-05-2017] UBI EST CHRISTUS?

Theologians make a living - with a few honorable exceptions - by telling stories about persons who never existed, and about events that never took place.

Bishops, in particular, enjoy a cosy life by having their pastors fleece the guillible sheep. Unfortunately they are seldom held to account for their wickedness. One of their tales wants us to know that Christ somehow went up to heaven, and is now still sitting up there on the right hand of his father, surrounded by his gang of disciples. The simple question they have to answer, is: Where, quite precisely, is he now sitting, or, perhaps, standing? This question was posted to all Danish bishops in April 2017 by Dr.Lindtner in several Danish newspapers.

None of the ten Danish bishops - all Lutheran - have been able to answer this simple question, in Danish: Hvor sidder Kristus? In Latin: Ubi est Christus?

The Danish church defines its bishops as experts in matters of Christ. In this case they demonstrated their expertise in ignorance and silence. A few common Christians came up with suggestions: He is sitting in my heart! The problem with this answer is that

these hearts must then be up somewhere in the sky, and, apart from that, Christian monotheism has suddenly turned into polytheism. Now we have as many Christs as we have human hearts!

Some found that the question should not be answered, for it was blasphemous. The best reply was, perhaps: In the middle of Nowhere!

But where is Nowhere? Next time you are invited to recite the Apostles' Creed, you may want to ask this question to your local shepherd, too.

Will he be one of the few honest pastors who admits that the Creed was never intended to be taken serious? Will he know that it has Buddhist sources?

[20-05-2017] Buddhist Monuments of King Harald: Aggersborg & Jelling.

The monuments of King Harald to be seen in Jelling and Aggersborg may be taken as an attempt to promote the Anuttram. Dharmacakram first turned by Tathâgato, and, after him, by Sâriputto. First, take a look at the ring fortress of Aggersborg. Aggersborg, Northern Jutland

There are three circles. The diameters are 240, 264 and 288 meters, respectively. Starting with the outer circle, one gets a 904,32 circle, or wheel, with an inscribed cross = 576. The image as a whole thus adds up to 1480,32. Here, 1480 is the number of Khristos.

In Sanskrit 1481 is the number of the statement: asti madhyamâ pratipat: It is the Middle Path. The number 576 is confirmed by looking at Jelling, where the long diagonal in the 1440 (= 4 x 360) rhombus is 576 meters.

Jelling seen from above

Thus $576 = 2 \times 288$ = the cross in Aggersborg. Now 1440 is the octagon in the 1480 circle of Khristos. The number 1440 confirms the identity: ekei ho Messias ho Emmanouël = 1440. The diameter of the inner Aggersborg circle is 240, which gives the 753,6 circle. This circle along with the inscribed cross thus adds up to 1233,6. But 1233 is 656 for Messias, and either 576 for pneuma, or for the Greek euaggeliuon = 577.

The middle circle in Aggersborg has the 264 diameter; the circumference is thus 828,96. The circle and the cross is thus 1356,96. Inscribed in this circle you will find the ca. 686 equilateral triangle = 686. But 686 is the number of Tathâgato (in Pâli), and of Aryan Truths, âryasatyâni in Sanskrit.

In the Sanskrit tradition it is said that there are four equilateral triangles having twelve points. That adds up to 1443 for triparivartam, and 777 for dvâdâkâram. This is said of the Dharmayam Dharmacakram = 524. Add you, and you get $524 + 1443 + 777 = 2744$. And 2744 is 4×686 . the Four Aryan Truths inscribed - following the Sanskrit perfectly. So, here, the 264 diamter in the 828,96 circle provides us with a complete image of the Buddhist Wheel of Dharm(s).-

The purpose of following the Buddhist Path is to attain peace of mind, in Pâli upasamo, the number of which is 792. But 792 is the number obtained by adding the three Aggersborg diameters: $240+264+288$. The Pâli says: ayam eva ariyo atthangiko maggo = 1521: This is the Aryan eightfold Path. But 1480, above, is the octagon inscribed in

the 1521 circle. These and numerous similar observations to the very same effect go to show that the monuments of Harald can only be properly understood provided you start out with the Buddhist Wheel of Dharma.

In Sanskrit, it is called Anuttaram Dharmacakram = 1521. Once you have the numbers of these circles etc., you will also have the numbers of the inscribed polygons, etc. Once you have these numbers, you should compare them with the corresponding numbers of basic concepts in Pāli as well as in Sanskrit. You will see that the intention of Harald - or his architects - was to export the Dharmacakram to Danish soil.

According to the Buddhist myth, the Anuttaram Dhammacakkam (Pāli) was first promoted in Benares, more precisely: Bârânasiyam Isipatane Migadâye = $418+657+75 = 1150$. That location corresponds to the square formed by the four ca. 288 diameters of Aggersborg. The precise figure will then be $287,5 \text{ meters times four} = 1150$. The number is perfect, for there must be a narrow path for you to walk on when you visit Aggersborg. -Now return to Jelling and take a look at the Pantokrator on the rune stone. Jelling Runestone

The span of his arms from fingertip to fingertip is exactly 110 or 110,5 cm. Multiply that figure by $\pi = 3,14\dots$, and you land on precisely 346. And as all Buddhists must know, 346 is the number for "Buddhism", viz.: dharmas = 346; mârgas = 346; ariyo dhammo = 346. There can thus hardly be any doubt that the figure on the runestone has a simple message for all educated visitors to Jelling: He is Khristos = 1480, and that figure, confirmed over and over, also implies the number 1421: This is the Aryan eightfold Path! Welcome to the introduction of the Anuttaram Dharmacakram in Denmark.

That is how it started, but did not last for long. After a few decades all the monuments of Harald were forgotten. Thanks to the Buddhist sources, we may now begin to understand what King Harald was actually up to. The lion on the runestone surely reminds us of the four Macedonian lions of King Asoka!

Finally, the circle with the 2×264 cross = 1356,96 cannot fail to remind us of: aruyo atthagiko maggo = 1063, plus 294 for ekklêsia = 1357. And, again, 1357 is kathêgêtês kurios. 1357 also says: I belong to God: egô eimi theou. Or it says: Look, I am (viz. here in Aggersborg).

[20-05-2017] SAINT PETER'S WHEEL AND STÛPA IN ROME

The most famous of all churches dedicated to Sâri-Putto, or Sâri-Putras, is, of course the one in Rome. Misleadingly, it is better known as Saint Peter's Church, and the "square" is more like a circle or wheel: to be quite precise, it is the Buddhist Dharma-cakram (in Pāli Dhamma-cakkam). The eight radii are obvious. It represents the Aryan eightfold Way.

All Buddhists know what all Christians seem not to know: The Buddhist legend has it that all seven Buddhas "turned" the Dharma-cakram. When the last one, called Sâkyamuni, was about to pass away, he appointed Sâri-putto to be his Dharma general.

Sâri-putto had been reborn many times, and he would be reborn once again to promote the Dharma-cakram in foreign countries.

This myth is found in several Buddhist texts, beginning probably with Sutta-Nipâta, v. 557: "Sâri-putto, following (me) Tathâgato, will keep the Unsurpassed Dharma-wheel rolling, that has been set rolling by me." When the time was ripe, Sâri-putto was, as predicted, reborn as the first bishop of Rome, and as the first pope in a long line, now represented by Francis, a sort of SP redivivus. If you take the trouble - as all honest Buddhists and Christians should do - to compare what Buddhist gospels have to say about Sâri-putto with what the Christian gospels have to say about Simôn Petros, you can only arrive at the conclusion that the Christian SP is no other than the Buddhist SP in disguise, a very typical disguise.

SP plays the same role as the first disciple of the Lord in both traditions. The main canonical source of Rome's presumptuous authority is, as we all know, Matthew 16, 13-20. Here, Messiah calls him Bar-lônas, which is a translation of what SP is called in Mahâyâna, viz. Jina-putras, son of Jinas (= Buddhas = Messias).

The Aramaic bar translates the Sanskrit putras; and lônas contains the pun on Jinas. SP is also called kumâra-bhûtas, where kumâras is "prince", and -bhûtas means "is", or has become, or the like. That is why Messiah says: su ei, you are; and when he calls him blessed, the Greek MaKaRioS renders the Sanskrit KuMâRaS in a typical fashion. He is also called Kêphas, and said to be the "rock", or petra, of the church. Hence the church of SP in Rome.

But here you have to know geometry to solve the puzzle: The number of Kêphas is 729, and when you draw a circle with 729 as the circumference, the "fish" will be 486, the number of the Greek petra, which at the same time contains a pun on PuTRaS and on PeTRoS. The square in the 729 circle is 656, which is the number of Messiah. The diameter in the 729 circle is 232,1656, and six diameters thus add up to 1393, which is, indeed the number of Sâri-Putras (= 200+2+100+10+80+300+100+1+200). The eight diameters add up to 1855, which is the number of Simôn Petros = 1100+755 = 1855. SP is known as a presbuteros, and elder, translating sthaviras in Sanskrit; and thero in Pâli. The number of presbuteros is 1462, but the number of his name in Pâli, viz. Sâri-Putto is also 1462 (=200+2+100+10+80+400+300+300+70). When the six diameters are nicely drawn in the 729 circle of Kêphas, you see a dodecagon. It measures 721, which is the number of Tisyas, one of the most common names of SP in Buddhism.

In Buddhist gospels it is repeatedly said that SP will be reborn and "turn" the Dharmacakram with its four diameters. So the ancient Buddhist prophecy finally became true. What you see when you visit the great church of Saint Peter in Rome is a stûpa dedicated to Saint Putto, and what you see in from of that stûpa is, as expected, the Dhamma-cakram, or Dhamma-cakkam.

If you enter the SP stûpa, you may, if you are lucky, meet the most recent incarnation of SP - Pope Francis. With some luck this friendly chap may take you down underground where he will show you, what "is said to be" the tomb of Saint Peter.

In a way, he is, of course, not being dishonest. The tomb is identified as such with typical Buddhist irony. It, too, belongs to a large picture of deceit. SP has, in Sanskrit and Pâli, many other epithets or surnames. All of them turn up in Christian tradition. In a few cases the identification is tricky. Thus Kêphas was originally KâSyaPaS, another famous disciple. As the Buddhist saying goes: One becomes many, and many become

one.

The church, the circular square and the tomb thus serve as a splendid but also silent monument in memory of the first disciple of Buddha, or Tathâgato.

But what about the Christian faith? Does it also have Buddhist roots? To answer that question, one needs to have a look at the Apostle's Creed, also known as the Symbolon Apostolicum. In its earliest Roman form it consists of 12 brief statements, each of which is ascribed to one of the twelve disciples.

Any modern Buddhist taking an interest in his own scriptures can identify these twelve:

The first is Simôn Petros, originally Sâri-Putto. The second is Andreas, originally Aniruddhas. The third is 'Iakôbos, originally Kâsyapas. The fourth is 'Iôannês, originally Ânandas. The fifth is Thômas, originally Tamas (in anyatamas, meaning twin, another), etc. etc. Their confession has three parts. The first deals with the Father, i.e. Buddha or Tathâgato. The second part deals with his son - the Jina-putras. The third deals with the samgha, the church, the congregation of holy men, i.e. bodhisattvas etc. These are known as the Three Jewels among Buddhists.

Christians refer to them as a unit, called Trinitas, with a pun on Sanskrit tri-ratnas. Petros, i.e., Putras, is the first to speak, and what he says about his "father" can be traced right back to what is said about Brahmâ and about Tathâgato in the early Brahmajâlasuttam. Here, God, the Great God, identifies himself in the typical NT way beginning with an "I am", (egô eimi): aham asmi Brahmâ... vassavatî... issaro kattâ pitâ bhûtabhavyânam... (The full text published e.g. in A.K.Warder, Introduction to Pâli, London 1984, p. 198.).

This definition of God as Almighty, Father, etc. is lifted by "Peter" from a famous Buddhist euaggelion, or sûtram. When it finally comes to the Christian sacraments, baptism, the eucharist, confession of sins etc. - these are all well known from the Buddhist gospels of Mahâyâna. And so, I invite all serious Buddhists around the world, to brush up their Sanskrit and Pâli, and then to study sufficient Latin and Greek, so that the Buddhist sources of Christianity can be fully identified. The conclusion can only be that Christianity is a Mahâyâna sect intended for the West. The meaning or the Secret of the identity of Christ and SP as found in Matthew 16, 13-20 should thus be obvious.

[19-04-2017] "Resurrection cancelled!"

...says science journalist Lone Frank in Copenhagen church. Outraged Lutheran wizards deeply offended. Bad news for good business. "Resurrection of Jesus is a FACT that cannot be discussed", howls wizard Lilleør.

Irrefutable proof of resurrection of Jesus is provided by Paul, 1 Cor. 15, says grand wizard Troels Engberg-Pedersen - ignoring the Buddhist source about the "more than 500 brothers", etc., pointed out by Chr. Lindtner long ago and known to all Danish theologians.

[16-04-2017] Er tiden løbet fra Luther?

Debatindlæg af Chr. Lindtner. Bragt i Information, d. 19. november 2017.

Den danske folkekirke står og falder med Luther og hans udlægning af evangeliet – eller Guds ord. Overalt i landet forberedes eller fejres de 500 år, der er gået, siden den tyske munk påbegyndte sit opgør med den katolske kirke. Som det kan læses på en reformationsmedalje fra 1717, betød Reformationen, at troen blev fri fra pavens tyranni, dvs. fra bl.a. afl adshandel, helgendyrkelse og munkevæsen. Hundrede år senere, fejredes Luther for at have »genoprettet evangeliets sandhed«. Det var under Frederik VI. På Luthers tid troede man på mirakler, på djævl og hekse, og – i lighed med paven – mente reformationens mænd, at jorden var det midtpunkt i verden, hvorom solen drejede. Disse og andre former for overtro har kirken i takt med videnskabens fremgang diskret valgt at skrive i den store glemmebog.

Hvad med Jesus? Men tilbage står store spørgsmål, som mig bekendt slet ikke tages op til diskussion i forbindelse med nogle af de mere end 400 arrangementer, der fi nder eller har fundet sted i 2017. Hvad med Jesus selv? Er han et produkt af samme uvidenhed, der frembragte hekse og djævl og anden overtro? Luther mente, at Jesus eller Kristus var at fi nde i selve Bibelen, men moderne teologisk forskning mener nu, at Det Nye Testamente er en slags genskrivning af ældre bibelske skrifter og derfor ikke giver pålidelig viden om hovedpersonen bag

det hele. Og på samme måde kan den moderne religionsvidenskab påvise, at næsten alt, hvad der siges om eller gøres af »Guds søn«, allerede blev sagt om og gjort af de mange andre gudesønner, der fandtes i den gamle verden. Hvem skal man så tro mest på? Alt dette havde Luther af gode grunde ingen anelse om. For ham var det nok, at man blot troede på de ord, man læste i tysk eller dansk oversættelse. En veluddannet moderne teolog ved udmærket godt, at Det Nye Testamente er en samling fortællinger og myter, akkurat som de gamle græske, romerske og indiske gudefortællinger. Mig bekendt har man aldrig på noget dansk universitet rejst det helt afgørende spørgsmål: Har Jesus overhovedet eksisteret? Er alle disse fortællinger blot fortællinger?

Videnskabeligt holdepunkt Er svaret, at der ikke er videnskabeligt holdepunkt for troen på en historisk Jesus, ja, så er den logiske konsekvens heraf indlysende: Så hører de teologiske fakulteter slet ikke hjemme på et moderne universitet. Man kan dog ikke dyrke videnskab om noget, der slet ikke eksiste

rer. Hvad afl adshandelen indbragte paven, blev bl.a. anvendt til at opføre Peterskirken i Rom. Den står der stadig til glæde for alle med interesse for kunst og arkitektur. Jeg kender ikke regnskabet i detaljer, men gætter på, at det har været småbeløb set i forhold til, hvad lønninger til reformerte præster med tiden har ophobet sig til. Og netop nu i 2017 ser det ud til, at Luther er blevet forvandlet til en moderne helgen, i hvis hellige navn folkestyret gerne åbner for pengekiten. Siden 1536, da Reformationen blev gennemført under Christian III, for hvem Luthers ord nærmest var Guds ord, har først kongekirken og dernæst, fra 1849, folkekirken forstået at slå mønt af, hvad der muligvis blot er en gammel myte. For uden en historisk Jesus eller Kristus er hele reformationsjubilæet jo ikke meget andet end fejringen af et kæmpemæssigt bedrag, der stiller de pavelige afl adsbreve helt i skyggen. Hvis man ellers kan forlade sig på traditionen, så skal Luthers modpart, pave Leo X (1475-1521) have udtalt: »Hvilket udbytte vi og vore har haft af den fabel om Kristus, er vel erkendt af alle slægtled.« Leo X var et kvikt hoved og veluddannet, og selvom citatet måske ikke er ægte, udtrykker det en opfattelse, han ikke var alene om dengang og endnu mindre i dag, 500 år senere. Mange kvikke hoveder deler Leos åbenhjertige mening. Den danske folkekirke

er gået hen og blevet en rigtig god forretning. Ikke blot for mere end 2.000 præster, teologer med fl ere, men så god, at det ikke kan forventes, at det kan komme til en off entlig kvalifi ceret debat om det altoverskyggende spørgsmål: Er Jesus overhovedet en historisk person? Luther skal have lagt vægt på frihed og frimodighed, hører man, men hvor er den præst, der er frimodig nok til at rejse spørgsmålet, om Kristus blot er en gammel fabel, og ærlig nok til at indrømme, at tiden er løbet fra Luther?

[15-04-2017] Jesus on the coins of his Dad

Jesus Christ (JC) is, as we must learn to understand, one of the numerous mythical sons of God, who likes to puzzle and tease all those who believe that they believe in him. To solve his puzzles you must, as a rule, know not only Greek, but also Latin, Sanskrit and Pâli, as well as a bit of mathematics and numismatics.

How come JC is said to sit or stand at the right hand of his Father?

How come JC says that his Father is sitting on a throne up there somewhere in the sky, a location that has never been identified by modern astronomers?

How come JC, a Galilean, compares himself to a hen, in Greek: ornis, in Latin: gallina?

How come JC takes an interest in the image of a ruler on a coin?

Why do the soldiers, who mock JC, place a rod in his right hand and call him king of the Jews?

To answer these questions, or to crack the code, you merely need to have a look at one of the most common coins from the Hellenistic period, shown here:

Greek God became Jewish God

What you see here is the Father of all men and gods, as Homer says, and as all Greek and Romans knew for sure.

What you see in the right hand of Zeus is supposed to be an eagle, but it takes only a bit of imagination to take the bird as being a hen. On some of the coins, it even seems to have laid an egg!

So what the enthroned Father of men and gods is holding in his right hand is simply the Galilean Gallina, i.e. one of his many sons.

The simplest explanation for the rod in the right hand of JC is that it was the famous scepter of Zeus, who, on the coins, holds it in his left hand. The scepter, an old symbol of monarchy, is now handed over to the king of the Jews, who holds it in his right hand. Thus it makes perfect sense when JC is said to be son of God, for, as all Greeks know, all kings - including the one of Israel or of the Jews - are sons of Zeus. And as such Zeus is enthroned somewhere up there in the sky.

The Lord's prayer is a prayer to Zeus, who, also according to old Homer, has his abode in the sky.

Naturally, his name must be "holy", which means that the name of Zeus, his father, must never be mentioned! The true ID of JC is a secret, just as the true name of his Father, i.e. Zeus, must be kept secret!

Of course, if you ask your local pastor or bishop, he will tell you that you need not know a word of Greek or Latin, and certainly not Pâli and Sanskrit, in order to make sense of the "Word of God", or of the so-called "Gospel". No bishop will admit the simple truth that the Greek word for Gospel, euaggelion, is a simple translation of the Sanskrit synonym sūtram.

Very often, JC likes to tease his opponents by inviting them to solve a mathematical paradox.

Thus, in a famous incident, he asks his opponents how it can be that Christ is, at the same time a son and a lord, i.e. younger and older in relation to king David. (See Matthew 22, 41-46, and my paper in Brahnavidyâ 78-79, pp. 47-157 for many more examples of Jesus as a mathematician.)

They cannot solve the puzzle because they know nothing about numbers.

The simple solution is: Khristos is 1480, and the sum of Son, huiois, and Lord, kurios, is $680+800 = 1480$.

So, these idiots don't even know that 1480 is $800 + 680$!

There is, in the body of the Greek text of the NT, almost no end to such paradoxes and puzzles posed by the words of JC.

But, as said, without the Greek, Latin, Pâli and Sanskrit etc., you are bound to be lost, exactly as were the Pharisees in Matthew 22, 41-46.

Luther and his modern followers claim to be true to the word of God as found in the Gospel translated into modern languages.

Luther was wrong, and so are bishops who not only deny that euaggelion translates sūtram, but who also claim that the New Testament has nothing to do with numbers or geometry. They are, in other words, exactly like those poor Pharisees, who were not able to say a word in reply to JC.

One of the most striking characteristics of Zeus is that he can undergo transformations, and the same applies to his numerous sons, many of whom were kings. And so, to sum up, a look at the famous coin provides us with the main source of the fable of the transformation of a Galilean Hen who eventually became the king of the Jews. Keeping this transformation in mind, it also becomes evident why JC claims that he and his father are one. And, since a father comes before a son, it is Zeus who becomes the father of JC, not vice versa.

[26-12-2016] It is easier for a Camel than it is for a Bishop...

It is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle, than it is for a bishop to be honest about the Christmas hoax. How can a Jewish king, who never even existed, have been born by a virgin!

It is easier for a turtle to thrust its neck through the hole of a yoke floating on the ocean, than it is for a pope to reveal the Buddhist sources of the Mass mysteriously celebrated on Christmas Eve.

It is easier for the son of a barren woman to marry his own daughter and have twelve children with her, than it is for a Dalai Lama to make much sense of the Dharma, if he

does not know Greek. For how can he explain Tathâgatas if he is ignorant of a kaloskagathos or a kathêgêtês!

It is easier for a man to catch his own shadow, than it is for a scholar to grasp the New Testament, if he is ignorant of Sanskrit and Pâli.

It is easier for water to run upwards, than it is for anyone to understand the puzzle of the Son of Man, if he has never studied Euclid.

It is easier for two to be four, than it is for anyone to explain why Christians worldwide would worship a god willing to sacrifice his own innocent son in order to please a gang of revengeful Jews calling for his blood.

It is easier to calculate the number of grains of sand in the Nile, than it is to figure out why a Dalai Lama lets a pope get away with pretending to be the legitimate successor of Sâriputras (widely known as Simon Peter, first fake bishop of Rome).

Is it not easier for all our priests to walk on water, than it is for a decent individual - a kaloskagathos - to applaud the meretricious gaudiness of Rome!

It is easy to figure out why Lutherans are busy celebrating the so-called Reformation of a brave and brutal German run-away monk. Luther enabled them to make an easy life merely by fooling the gullible masses for half a millennium with advanced Buddhist fairy tales about an imaginary Buddha who was reborn out of love for his people.

Phony Sâri-putras begging Buddhas to keep the secret by blessing the poor in spirit.

[30-10-2016] Christ's Burial Place - a Buddhist stûpas

A few days ago, National Geographic created headlines worldwide by posting a bit of "sensational" false news: Christ's Burial Place Exposed for First Time in Centuries!

Correctly, National Geographic informs us that the tomb chamber has served as a focalpoint of veneration since it was first identified by Helena, the mother of the Roman emperor Constantine, in A.D. 326.

What the reader is not informed about is the fact that for centuries Greek, Roman and Buddhist priests had identified numerous locations where their gods and saints had been born, worked miracles, passed away etc. - often in different places at the same time. Helena was thus just repeating an old story, pouring new wine on old bottles.

The list of pious frauds knows no end. Students familiar with the Lotus Gospel know how to set the record straight: When a Buddha, a so-called Tathâgatas, passes away, a stupas is typically erected for worship in his memory. He and his gospel is then considered to be contained in such a stûpas. Hence its worship.

One must know the Greek term for the grave or tomb of Jesus - taphos. The Greek taphos renders the Sanskrit stûpas. As always one must know gematria to solve the

puzzle precisely. The number of stûpas is $200+300+400+80+1+200 = 1181$, which then is translated into Greek: $ekei\ ho\ taphos = 40+70+\frac{1}{2}071 = 1181$. The Greek means: Here is the grave. The Greek thus points to the Sanskrit stûpas. But only a Buddhist would know the trick!

When you read what the Lotus Gospel and the MPS write about Tathâgatas, his passing away, and his body, bones or ashes being located in a stûpas, it becomes obvious that the Christian cult of Jesus in the taphos is but an echo of the Buddhist ritual. For obvious reasons a stûpas is often empty.

There is no Tathâgtas in there! But that does not really matter. The important thing is that you worship the stûpas in faith as a sort of symbol of the teacher and his teachings. The Christian worship of the empty taphos is thus a typical example of the Buddhist worship of an empty stûpas.

But would Buddhist missionaries really be willing to play such tricks? According to their own words, they most certainly would. When you study the Buddhist sources of the Eucharist, you cannot fail to see that here, too, we are dealing with a sort of secret worship of the Buddhist hero, the Tathâgatas. The point of the Eucharist is to make you "eat and drink" - i.e. absorb the Lord and his teaching so that it all becomes a part of yourself. These tricky Buddhists even have a technical term for this sort of hidden propaganda - "skill in means".

[29-10-2016] ODD GALILAEAN REPLACES OLD BUDDHA

Jesus, according to Mark 11,12-14, cursed a completely innocent fig tree - a sukê in Greek. But why? Failing to go ad fontes, New Testament scholars have offered various subjective speculations to explain the plain absurdity.

Matthew 11,18 brings us a bit closer to the solution of the puzzle, when he refers to the fig tree as a sukên mian, in the accusative case. We come even closer, when we read about another tree, a suka-minos, a mulberry tree. If you have faith, you can order it to pull itself up by its roots and plant itself in the sea. This is Luke 17,6. Again, poor tree! The fig tree and the mulberry tree now belong to the past!

Students familiar with the Lotus Gospel have no problem when it comes to the correct solution of the absurd story. In the Lotus Gospel we learn of the old Buddha called Sâkya-munis, now about to pass away and to be replaced by a new Buddha.

In Buddhists gospels, the rareness of their appearance is often compared to that of the rareness of a flower on a fig tree. So, here we have the fig tree once again combined with (a) Buddha. The Sanskrit for this fig tree is udumbaras. So, obviously, the sukên mian as well as the suka-minos are to be taken as puns on the original Sanskrit: Sâkya-munis. Jesus is, here as always, a new Buddha who replaces the old one.

The belief that if you have faith, then you can even move mountains, is also typical Buddhist. See my essay "Faith as Small (or as Big) as a Mustard Seed", reprinted in Michael Lockwood, Mythicism, p. 116, where the Sanskrit sources are given. Once you know what to look for, you will also be able to trace the udumbaras behind the words ascribed to Jesus, the new Buddha who replaced the most famous of the old ones.

New Testament scholarship that ignores Sanskrit and Pâli sources can, I fear, be

expected one day to share the sad fate of the fig and the mulberry tree! Nor must the geometry always involved be ignored. In this case the first question is: What is the geometry behind the transformation from Sâkyamunis to sukê mia?

The second question is: What is the geometry accounting for Sâkya-munis turning up as Suka-minos? Here, as usual, whoever has intelligence, must figure out the number of the beast!

[17-09-2016] Chr. Lindtner and dr. Robert M. Price in a conversation about fairy tales and fables common to Buddhism and Christianity on Radio Lindtner.

[06-09-2016] Buddhas bloody body. The Lord's (Last) Supper - the Eucharist - its Sanskrit Source.

The most holy of all Christian sacraments is certainly that of the Eucharist, also known as the Lord's Supper, or the Last Supper.

Surrounded by his disciples, Jesus offered them his blood to drink and his body to eat. They still do so, mainly on Sundays.

In order to make some sort of sense of this absurd nonsense all sorts of suggestions have been offered. Wrong options have cost innumerable lives that could have been saved by going to the Buddhist sources, the most important of which is found in Sanskrit.

Lord Buddha, who typically refers to himself as Tathâgata(s) is surrounded by his disciples, and this is their last meal together. Soon, he will pass away.

Here is what Tathâgatas said to his closest disciples (MPS 42,10):

The Tibetan version corresponds exactly to the Sanskrit. No Pâli version is available. The Chinese version runs (in the German version of Ernst Waldschmidt, Berlin 1951, p. 395):

"Betrachtet jetzt den Körper des Buddha! Betrachtet jetzt den Körper des Buddha! Warum? Tathâgatas, Arhats, wahrhaft Erleuchteten begegnet man schwer wie einer Udumbarablume."

But this is only the first part of the story. In this Buddhist source there is no mention of shedding blood. Now, all Buddhists are familiar with the idea that in a previous life, before being reborn as a real Buddha, he sacrificed himself for the benefit of other living creatures.

For instance, he cut off his arm and gave it to a hungry tigress who then gave it to her hungry cub. By drinking the blood and by eating the flesh the cub survived. This well-known Buddhist fable, or Jâtrakam, is the source of the New Testament fable about Jesus shedding his blood for many (Matthew 26,28 par) and even giving up his life for

the world on the cross.

Thus two different Buddhist sources have been combined and Buddha has been reborn once again now under a new name. The story will repeat itself. In reality he will never die; he will be back to enjoy eternal life along with his closest disciples.

Commentary:

Tathâgatas invites his disciple - twice - to have a careful look at his body. Why?

Because such a Buddha only occurs very rarely - like the flower on a fig-tree.

In the mad Christian copy, the disciples are invited to eat and drink the Tathâgatas!

The flower of the Udumbaras is changed into the fruit of the vine. Thus the point about the rareness is almost lost.

When you compare the Sanskrit and the Greek words, you will hear typical puns:

Ta-thâ-ga-tas-ya becomes tês di-a-thê-kês, etc.

To spell that out:

Buddhists are invited to think of the Buddha who appears in this world so rarely.

Christian readers are invited to swallow Tathâgatas completely - blood as well as flesh.

Originally, it was the hungry cub that did so in order to survive. The cub has been transformed into a Christian carnival, as it were.

The purpose of participating in the Holy Supper is thus clear: You must become a Buddhist - without the Christian priest telling you the deeper meaning of this profound mystery. It makes some sense if you imagine yourself to be a hungry cub.

The Pope has the bad habit of speaking of a profound mystery of transfiguration.

Well, had he been a bit more honest, he would have told you that what is actually at stake, is a rather typical case of mysterious Buddhist translations.

That a Pope promotes Buddhism is to be expected, once you recall that Simôn Peter is just Sâri-Putras in disguise. Buddhist monks will tell many stories about the rebirths of Sâri-Putras. Most famous is his rebirth as the first bishop of Rome.

It goes without saying that the Buddhist and the Christian episodes must be seen in the original textual context.

If you do so, you will find that similar events occur in both sources.

So, as usual, we are dealing with pirate copies.

The unknown Buddhist authors of the Eucharist achieved what they wished to achieve:

Their intention was to convert "the entire world" to Buddhism - without them knowing it.

They did quite well.

In Mahâyâna there is something called skill in means, upâya-kausalyam. It has to do with hidden propaganda.

The Eucharist provides the most splendid example of this sort of Buddhist propaganda.

Buddhas bloody body served by John Huss and Martin Luther - little did they know!

Engraving from the second quarter of the 16th century.

[19-08-2016] Chr. Lindtner in a candid conversation with Kenneth Humphreys, author of Jesus Never Existed. On myths and deceptions of professional theologians, and their ignorance of sacred geometry and the Buddhist sources of the New Testament.

[13-07-2016] New light on early Christianity in Denmark. King Harald's Christ was both name and number, as in the New Testament. No silly Lutheran belief in a historical Christ at all.

Link to article in Vejle Amts Folkeblad, click picture below.
Christian Lindtner and Niels Bandholm in front of a copy of king Harald Bluetooth's runestone. Jelling, 2016.

[20-02-2016] THE SANSKRIT KID IN THE LOTUS MANGER

It is about time that good Christians started asking themselves and their brothers, why their pastors and bishops do not want to learn Sanskrit, and why Sanskrit is being expelled from European universities that used to have a glorious tradition of Sanskrit and Buddhist studies. How can that be? Why are they afraid of Sanskrit??

I have asked the Copenhagen bishop, to be sure, and his reply was that he had no time to look at the Buddhists sources of the New Testament, and certainly no time for Sanskrit! I have asked countless professors of the New Testament, and precisely a year ago, Århus professor of theology Anders-Christian Jacobsen made his position clear: "I will not learn Sanskrit!" Are they just lazy? Perhaps so. But there is much more at stake: Their daily bread.

So, good Christians should start asking serious questions, just little ones for a start. For instance: How can it be that the mother "in those days" placed the little boy (Greek: to paidion) in a "manger". To answer the puzzle you must know the Greek and the Sanskrit, and then compare the two.

As all Buddhists know the proper place for a Buddha and a Bodhisattva is in or on a Lotus. The Sanskrit for "in a Lotus" is pad-me, the locative form of padmam, a lotus. In Greek, the bo-dhi-sat-tvam becomes the little boy: to pai-di-on. The Sanskrit -sat-tvam means "be-ing". That becomes to...on, meaning in Greek: be-ing. Next, the bo-dhi becomes pai-di. Thus, bo-dhi-sat-tvam has changed into to pai-di-on. He has been reborn! Ask your local pastor to think it over, or take a chat with the bishop!

But the manger, please!

Well, the Greek says "in a manger", en phat-nê. So, again, a locative form. Just as you can hear, how bo-dhi becomes pai-di, thus you can also hear, how pad-me becomes phat-nê. And there are hundreds of similar examples of the same sort. One or two examples prove nothing, but hundreds do. When you read the Lotus Sûtram, even in a modern translation, you will find that the Lotus, i.e. the Buddha, orders his disciples and missionaries to spread the Lotus all over the world by means of puns and plays on words of the sort given here.

Just to listen to the sound of a Lotus is sufficient, he assures us. The idea is - as all Japanese Buddhists will agree - that merely by hearing and reciting the sound of pad-me and of bo-dhi, you will achieve the greatest happiness in the world. That is why Loukas writes phat-nê and pai-di. But it will not work in a modern translation, where all

is lost! Hence, good Christians must take up a bit of Greek and Sanskrit! - if they want to follow in the steps their Saviour.

The evangelist called Luke shared this conviction and followed orders when "translating" into Greek. His name, in Greek, is Loukas, an echo or pun on the Sanskrit original: Lokas, meaning "world". When you have come that far, you may ask for a solution to the old paradox of bo-dhi-sat-tvam (accusative case of bo-dhi-sat-tvas) having been born of a virgin.

Here, again, you must first pick up a bit more of Greek and Sanskrit, and then compare. The Greek for "virgin" is PaRTHeNos. In Sanskrit there are many synonyms for Lotus apart from padmam. One of these is PuNDaRîka-, as in the very title of the Saddharma-pundarîka-sûtram - the Lotus. To be born from a virgin is in Greek: ek parthenou (genitive of parthenos). Behind eK PaRTHeNou you hear, exactly as above, PuNDaRîKa. That, again, solves the old puzzle about the number of man - i.e. Buddha aka Jesus - being 666:

Thus the number of p-u-n-d-a-r-î-k-a = 80+400+50+4+1+100+10+20+1 = 666. This means, of course, that the son of the virgin is to be found in the Lotus, and in that sense the apparent paradox of parthenogenesis proves to be perfectly true: The Lord is born in a Lotus. So, should you find any modern rationalist ridiculing the notion of parthenogenesis, it may well be that he is just as ignorant of Greek, Sanskrit, maths and comparative Gospel studies as the average pope and bishop.

I remain perpetually astonished. Thanks for this!

Robert M. Price

[17-02-2016] The Purpose of the Church of Denmark

In the well-considered view of Anders Sandøe Ørsted, the main purpose of the Church of Denmark, was, as this great man wrote in his autobiography: "to serve the enlightenment and ennoblement of the souls of Denmark's youth."

Now what a contrast to the misery, ignorance and vulgarity that haunts the current state of the Lutheran Church of our old kingdom! Who has not heard tags like "spaghetti service" and refrains of "equality and equal rights and love", oozing from the lips of the white clerical slime - but antiquated words like enlightenment and, worst of all, if you will excuse the term, "ennoblement" who has ever heard - if only by way of rumour - of such an out-of-place gospel shedding its light from a modernizing church?

[06-02-2016] JESUS wants YOU to carry the Lotus Sutra!

Jesus says: "And whoever does not take his CROSS (Greek : STauRoN) and follow after me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10,38). And according to Luke 14,27, he said: "Whoever does not carry his own CROSS (Greek: STauRoN) and come after me cannot

be my disciple." So the message is clear enough: To be a true disciple of Jesus, you must carry your STauRoN.

Accordingly, some Christians are still seen to carry a cross around their neck, in Denmark one of his followers - his name is Moses - enjoys to amaze the public by taking the burden of a huge cross on his back.

And where in the world do we see a church without a cross! Still, all Christians must be a bit puzzled. Does the Lord want his true disciples to let themselves be crucified? If so, why? Very strange, all of this!

If you are, however, among the millions of followers of the SûTRaM called the Lotus (Saddharma-pundarîka-sûtram), and if you are among the few who know a bit of Sanskrit, you will immediately see what Jesus has in mind. Scholars have already pointed out long ago that the New Testament writings contain numerous quotations from and allusions to the Lotus Sûtram, a work of Mahâyâna propaganda, and still popular in Japan and China.

The Lotus Sutra

The last words of Jesus are, for instance, taken from the Buddhist gospel! The great hero in this SûTRaM is called a SûTRa-dhârakas, and dhârakas, in Sanskrit means "one who carries". What Jesus therefore is saying is that YOU, too, have to be a SûTRa-dhârakas to follow him, otherwise YOU are not his true disciple! To carry the STauRoN really means to carry the SûTRaM. It is expressly stated that a true disciple carries a book of the Lotus on his shoulder!

Behind the Greek euaggelion we have the Sanskrit synonym sūtram, often taken by Buddhists as meaning good message. The disciple who carries the good message of the Lotus is what in the NT becomes an evangelist. The NT does not confine itself to four evangelists; others are also mentioned.

Behind these we have Buddhist missionaries. Even the term apostle, Greek apostolos can be traced back to a Sanskrit synonym (upasthâyakas or upasthâpakas). One of the main disciples in this SûTRaM is Sâri-PuTRaS. He followed his master's command, and eventually turned up under the name of Simôn PeTRoS. He even found his new home in Rome, where a few bones are now on display.

All of this is of course just Buddhist and Christian fantasies. But they certainly have sold well! This means that we here have yet another obvious case of Christianity as crypto-Buddhism, or Mahâyâna propaganda.

In this connection another puzzle finds its solution: The Dalai Lama has paid several visits to Denmark, and I personally recall him having expressed his wonder that many Danes want to turn to Buddhism. "Why", he said, "you already have Christianity! Why Buddhism?".

From these words I can only assume that he, too, is aware that Christianity is a sort of crypto-Buddhism. And the same goes for the Holy Father in Rome. When the Dalai Lama visited Rome in December 2014, it aroused some wonder among Buddhists worldwide that the Pope declined meeting his colleague, for he "did not have time to see the Dalai Lama". The two would certainly have had something to talk about - above all the historical foundations of the Roman church.

The public seems ignorant of the fact that at least some educated insiders in the Vatican know about their own Buddhist roots. This includes the former Pope, Benedict, who has personally supported the publication of a German translation of the

Lotus Sûtram. And those who may wish to dig deeper into this embarrassing truth need only consult the scholarly book by Michael Fuss, *Buddhavacanam & Dei Verbum. A Phenomenological & Theological Comparison of Scriptural Inspiration in the Saddharmapundarîka Sûtra & in the Christian Tradition*, Leiden 1991.

Here, the learned author concludes that the teachings of the Lotus and the New Testament are much the same. He does, however, avoid the most interesting of all questions: How can it be that the New Testament often looks like a copy of the Lotus Sûtram?

Instead, in a note hidden on page 421, Dr Fuss admits that this is "an intricate problem", and then refers to an old book from 1906, wherein the author wrote: "Where the Gospel narratives resemble the Buddhist ones, they seem to have been independently developed on the shores of the Mediterranean and in the valley of the Ganges..."

So, in this way, by using the verb "seem", these authors try to avoid what they very well know to be "an intricate problem". Openly and honestly to admit the simple historical fact of crypto-Buddhism would be very bad for Vatican business, indeed.

In Denmark, Lutheran professors and bishops are now busy baking layer cakes to celebrate the 1517 Reformation (read: Deformation) of Dr Martin Luther, who was, of course, completely ignorant of the fact that his beloved eu-aggelion, or Gospel, was originally the Buddhist Sûtram.

One does not have to be a prophet to foresee the future. In Denmark, Sanskrit and Buddhist studies have been banned from the universities. It is now up to Japanese, Chinese and other scholars carefully to compare, word for word, the Greek text of the New Testament with the Sanskrit text of the Lotus Sûtram and other Buddhist gospels already identified by the few competent European and American scholars active in this important field of research.

Eventually, opposition to Comparative Gospel Studies, will diminish, and even Lutherans will find themselves willing to confess that they were, all along, deep in their hearts, Buddhists. A good English translation of the Lotus by H. Kern from the Sanskrit is available online. It is a must for all Christians interested in their own roots - according to Christ's own words.

May Zeus have mercy upon their souls!

[23-01-2016] Acharya S. in memoriam

Ms Murdock was a brilliant scholar and an admirable American woman. Her defence of the Mythicist position deserves serious consideration.

Of her book "Who Was Jesus? Fingerprints of the Christ", the great American NT scholar, Dr. Robert M. Price wrote: "A really fine introduction to the problem of the historical Jesus... The best of this genre – written with clarity, precision and conviction." Students of the Buddhist sources of the New Testament will enjoy our late friend's review of Prof. Michael Lockwood's "Buddhism's Relation to Christianity". I sincerely hope that her writings on comparative religion and astrotheology will continue to find the many grateful readers they deserve.

Dr. Chr. Lindtner

[05-01-2016] Roskilde Bishop sanctions Hypocrisy

Roskilde bishop Peter Abraxas-Møller has just announced that Annette Berg may continue as a priest in the Danish Church. If she still believes in reincarnation that is a matter between her and God. It cannot be denied that this decision reflects a certain humane and tolerant attitude on the part of the Roskilde bishop - now very busy taking care of the global climate and preparing for the great Layer Cake celebration of Luther's Deformation.

There is a problem, however. What has here been sanctioned will prove fatal to the Lutheran church: If a bishop finds it OK for his pastors to have a personal belief that is opposite to his or her public or official belief, this means a sanction of plain hypocrisy. In his Press Release (4-1-2016) our Roskilde bishop himself commits a serious error when stating: "The study of theology at a university provides us with the tools that enable us to interpret the Bible and the confessional scriptures of the early church as well as of the Reformation."

He is quite mistaken. The truth is that a study of theology at one of the Danish universities does NOT provide the student with the tools required to obtain an honest understanding of, most of all, the New Testament. These 27 books are to a large extent translations from the Sanskrit and Pâli. All Danish professors of the New Testament ban the study of Sanskrit and Pâli as being a requirement for serious NT studies. Chr. Lindtner has warned them again and again. NT professor Mogens Menschensohn Müller stated the official position most clearly at the infamous Q-conference held in Roskilde, June 2015: We do not want to hear about (Buddhist) sources (in Sanskrit and Pâli)."

Not one single of the many "experts" present objected to his exorcism! All Danish priest have promised to preach the Euaggelion honestly as it really is. But the Euaggelion is the Sûtram (in Pâli: Suttam).

To avoid the charge of hypocrisy, they must take up the study of Sanskrit and Pâli. Shame on all the NT professors who will not do their Buddhist homework! Who will be the first honest Danish priest?

[31-12-2015] Who is THE Christmas BOY?

Christians all over the world have been busy celebrating the birth of a certain Jesus called (the) Christ. Of course, all the bishops and pastors know very well that there is no historical basis for the existence of Jesus Christ or for his birth on that day. They speak so much of love, but never of love of what really counts: love of truth. Otherwise they would have informed their ignorant sheep that this annual celebration is a celebration of mere myths, mainly Buddhist.

Any attentive reader of Matthew 2,8-14 must have been struck by the fact that the evangelist refers to "the boy" no less than six times. Obviously, Matthew wants his

reader to focus on "the boy", the Greek being: to pai-di-on.

Why is this? Who is this to pai-di-on? Why these most unusual repetitions?

Any Buddhist familiar with the Sanskrit and Pâli sources of the first chapters of Matthew can provide the simple answer to the question: who is to pai-di-on?

Matthew introduces the first book in the NT with the words: book of birth, Greek biblos geneseôs. The Sanskrit and Pâli original is Jâtakam, meaning book of birth, i.e. rebirth. All Buddhists are familiar with the numerous stories about the rebirth of bo-dhi-sat-tvas (nom. case). The accusative case is: bo-dhi-sat-tvam. What Matthew then goes on to relate is a new myth about the rebirth of bo-dhi-sat-tvam.

In Sanskrit sat-tvam means be-ing, which in Greek become to on (the first and the last syllable of the Greek to pai-di-on). No scholar will deny that the Greek is a perfect synonym of the Sanskrit.

The Greek pai-di- is then a "translation" of the sound of the Sanskrit/Pâli bo-dhi.

If the reader finds this to be a strange way of translation, he is right, but he should also remember that this sort of bizarre rendering was very popular among even the best educated Christian "fathers", e.g. Origen. As was to be expected, Jewish rabbis also loved this sort of play on words.

When Christians celebrate the birth of their Saviour they actually celebrate one of the numerous rebirths of the Saviour of the Buddhists - bo-dhi-sat-tvas.

The holy scripture of all Buddhists is called a sûttram. The term is often taken by them to mean "a good message", as if from su + uktam, well said. The Greek synonym is eu-aggelion, rendered as gospel. Often a sûttram contains a Jâtakam - or many stories of rebirths of bo-dhi-sat-tvas, or some of his disciples.

In 2015, the so-called Holy Father in Rome celebrated Christmas in what an honest historian would call Saint Putras Church.

There is a famous Buddhist Jâtakam according to which Sâri-Putras will be reborn as the head of the Church. Buddhist missionaries never forgot this famous prophecy (found in the ancient Sutta-Nipâtam and repeated in the Lotus Sutra.).

And so this Buddhist apostle eventually was reborn as the first bishop in Rome. His name had now been changed a little bit: He was now reborn or renamed as Simôn Petros. The identity of the two SPs can be proved by any scholar familiar with the Buddhist scriptures. Virtually all the stories told about SP the First are later on repeated by Christians now speaking about SP the Second. In both sources SP is explicitly called "the first (among the other apostles)".

Strictly speaking we do not need to make the distinction, for both of them are mere products of Buddhist-Christian imagination. In a famous gospel passage, the Christ - himself a mere Buddhist phantom - appoints SP as his successor. He uses the name Bar-lônas in speaking to SP.

The bar- is Aramaic for son, in Sanskrit we have -putras, a perfect synonym. The second part of the word is -lônas, which contains a pun of the Sanskrit Jinās, a synonym of Buddha(s). (Interested readers can identify the passages in the Lotus Sûtra).

So it is clear that SP - the First as well as the Second - is a son of Buddha, a Jina-putras = Bar-lônas.

Summing up: When the Holy Father in Rome celebrates the annual birth of to pai-di-on, it is obvious to a serious historian that it is the double SP who celebrates the rebirth of Bo-dhi-sat-tvam. The Holy Father loves to speak of the mystery of

transformation.

We now see that this transformation is not that mysterious after all: It is the Roman ceremony that each year turns bo-dhi-sat-tvam into to pai-di-on.

That it is "mysterious" means that it is a simple hoax.

Normally, Christians reject the "Buddhist" belief in rebirth or reincarnation. They prefer something called resurrection.

But what they actually worship is the rebirth of bo-dhi-sat-tvam, which is also a sort of resurrection. So here we again have a simple hoax, or "pious fraud".

In 2008, the Swedish scholar Bert Löfgren published what is certainly the best book on the great Roman hoax ever to appear in that language: *Katolska kyrkans djupa hemlighet*. It can be ordered from www.recito.se. The title refers to the crypto-Buddhism of the Roman church founded by the mythical SP.

Our wish for the New Year is this: That the Holy Father and all the bishops will be honest about the source of their Christian beliefs.

Pope worships Bodhisattvam

[29-12-2015] Roskilde Bishop goes Layer Cake

As a rule, Danish bishops are willing to play almost any trick in the book so as to fool their white sheep into the fold of the Danish church. Nothing new about that. Roskilde bishop Peter Fischer-Møller now announces a huge layer cake contest in order to celebrate Luther and the reformation. In this game, a Danish woman, Annemette Voss, famous for baking cakes, plays a major role along with the bishop himself.

Not only can she bake, she can also write about what she bakes. The title of her book "Kage-karma", i.e. Cake Karma.

On November 11, 2015, the bishop published a press announcement where he defined the belief of the Danish church.

The belief in karma, found in Buddhism and in Hinduism, is incompatible with the official belief of the church, which says:

1. Life in this world is valuable in itself and given by God,
2. Soul and body form a unit,
3. Only the grace of God can save us
4. Faith in our resurrection depends on the fact that Christ was resurrected on Easter Sunday.

Comments:

ad 1: It is a matter of common experience, that life in this world is anything but valuable in itself. To hold God responsible for the endless variety of suffering and miserable forms of life is simple blasphemy.

ad 2: If soul and body formed a unit, all would be lost once the body dissolves. Or we would have a soul separated from the body, in which case the two would not form a unit. We would be souls without bodies, i.e. ghosts (as claimed by veteran madcap theologian Old Ted Jørgensen).

ad 3. If life in this world is valuable in itself, as claimed, why would one want God to

save us? Who wants to be saved from something valuable?

ad 4. A recent debate involving many of Peter's fishy colleagues has demonstrated that the doctrine of physical resurrection is plain nonsense. Apart from that, it has been shown by Indologists that all these stories about resurrection are Buddhist fables.

The alert reader can easily expand the list of lies and absurdities for himself.

The great Layer Cake contest is announced to celebrate the mad German monk - as Luther wrote about himself - and his crazy ideas adopted by dishonest Danish bishops. Celebrating the Lutheran Deformation

Before the Reformation, bishops were among the richest men in the country. The current bishops are still very well paid, but on the average not as wealthy as their Catholic forerunners. But they are no less corrupt, if corrupt means prepared to fool the common people with silly theological lies.

All Danish priests know very well that if no coffee is served, their churches will be almost empty, and they themselves in the long run out of job. Add cakes to the coffee, and the future looks more promising.

Men, who make a good living by way of deception, will of course, abhor the prospect of being held responsible for their deeds. Hence it is understandable that they reject any idea of Buddhist karma, a law of moral retribution. No normal criminal wants to face the music of the law of karma! The four fundamental truths of the Danish church (above) are simply based on deliberate deception. So perhaps, after all, a Lutheran layer cake may serve as a great new symbol of the current state of affairs in the Danish church. There is a unity of soul and body. The spirit resides on the tongue, the soul in the stomach, and the grace of God consists in the lie that this primitive mode of life may go on forever and ever.

Annette Berg has been condemned for advocating karma, and Annemette, the new saint, will probably be ordered to remove the term karma from the title of her book about cakes.

Empty churches means empty pockets, and empty pockets means empty promises.

And one of the most empty promises of all promises offered by bishops has to do with baptism, as understood by Luther.

In an essay from October 2015, our Roskilde bishop thus promises that God is so full of love to all of us - provided we are Lutherans - that he gives us human dignity even if we are quite unworthy of such dignity. It is not at all a question of being a good, honest and decent human being. Not at all!

Instead, you must go to church and let yourself be baptized by some Lutheran priest.

Thus a bit of water will turn you into a saint in a jiffy.

Any human being who has not suffered some sort of induced cerebral damage immediately discerns that this is a simple trick designed to attract ignorant citizens so as to fill first the church, then the pockets of the priests, etc.

Along with the baptism bogus, we have the lie about the Eucharist. The Lutheran joke is that you eat and drink the flesh and blood of the Lord. This sacrament is NOT to be taken symbolically in any way. We are dealing with primitive Christian cannibalism.

The two sacraments are thus in harmony with the Lutheran layer cake.

A bit of water makes you a saint, and some bread and wine almost turns you into a god,